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Harald Schulz



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ISSUE #148 · JANUARY 2016
Published 26th November 2015

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American Car Magazine is published under contract by:

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THE OUTLOOK
6 SANSCOME WALK
WORCESTER
WR1 1LH

Tel: 01905 330177

DISTRIBUTION

Seymour Distribution Limited

PRINT

Print & Digital Publishing by Contract Publishing UK (CPUK) Ltd.

© 2015 Project Viva Limited
ISSN 2046-4580

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editor's letter



DAVE SMITH

EDITOR

It's November, the shows have finished and the last big events at the strips have been and gone. There are a handful of events left, but otherwise it's all downhill until Christmas. So, has 2015 been a stand-out year for the American car scene in the UK? Well, apart from some really poxy weather doing its best to ruin things and a less-than-spectacular summer on the whole, I reckon it has, yes.

Look back to the first half of the year, when petrol prices actually came DOWN! I mean, who saw that coming?! It's still painfully expensive, of course, but every little helps, and at least you don't leave the petrol station walking like John Wayne any more.

One aspect of the show season I've noticed is that the traditional show'n'shine event seems to be falling by the wayside. Some of the bigger events, such as the AACI's Billing bashes, are ever-popular, but more and more people I speak with are saying that they're fed up with turning up to a field where people park their cars, get their deck chairs out and sit waiting to see if they've won a trophy. More dynamism seems to be called for.

Look at the Brands Hatch American Speedfest, a giant of an event, where the show'n'shine happens alongside a full day of motor racing. Look at the spectacular rise of Dragstalgia, an event that's only been running a few years but that has already

One thing that has never gone out of fashion - the '67 Mustang



"The traditional show'n'shine event seems to be falling by the wayside"

annexed its spot on the calendar, its popularity easily rivalling that of similar but long-established events such as the NSRA Hot Rod Drags. RWYB events are still bubbling along nicely, too.

Then look at the hot rod holiday-type events. The Hot Rods & Hills event in Cumbria hardly has a static element to it at all, and that gets more popular every year. The Can-Am crew staged their first holiday camp weekender this year, and that's back by popular demand next year, too; let's see how that grows.

It seems showgoers are less content to just sit around all day. They want some action, they want to get involved. Where does this leave the old show'n'shine in a field? We'll have to wait and see, but one thing's for sure - like any other kind of event, you need to use it or lose it.

One other thing to look out for over the Christmas period is a big break between this issue of American Car Magazine and the next. Busy printing schedules and an awkward shut-down period over Christmas means that the February issue will be on sale mid-January, and from then on, every issue will be on sale around the second Thursday of the month preceding the cover date. That means you have a long, long time to read this magazine - you might want to pace yourself and not read it all in one sitting!

Other than that it just remains for me to wish all our readers, old and new, a very merry Christmas, a happy new year, and a safe and profitable holiday season. I look forward to seeing you in 2016. Now get out into that garage and make something happen!

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ACM news

THIS MONTH'S PRESSING ISSUES IN THE WORLD OF AMERICAN CARS

COPO & CJ



The biggest news of the moment, prior to the first of the major winter Auto Shows in Los Angeles, is coming from the annual Las Vegas monster, the SEMA Show.

We'll have more on that later, but two of the hottest stories concerned the drag race specials from the Bowtie and the Blue Oval. Chevrolet debuted their gen-six COPO Camaro with assistance from Camaro-driving NHRA Funny Car champ, Courtney Force. Chevrolet will build 69 of these COPO cars, all of which come ready to enter NHRA Stock and Super Stock Eliminator classes. The new-gen Camaro shell is 28% more rigid than the gen-five, while also being 133lbs lighter and more aerodynamic. The Red Hot COPO that Courtney unveiled has a 'concept' 350

racing engine with 2.9-litre Whipple supercharger, and will be auctioned by Barrett-Jackson next year to raise money for United Way.

The COPOs will have plenty of competition from the new 2016 Ford Mustang Cobra Jet, another turn-key eight-second race car ready to compete in the same classes. Only 50 blown CJs will be built, 25 in Oxford White and 25 in Deep Impact Blue, all of which share a surprising 75% of their engine parts with production models. It does feature the likes of a solid axle, coil-overs, Strange brakes and a boot-mounted fuel

cell, which are definitely not production pieces, though its electric water pump came from a Ford C-MAX hybrid!



Watts Happening

The first SP:01 all-electric sports car from the revived Detroit Electric rolled off the Leamington Spa production line at the end of October. The 285hp SP:01 is the

lightest, fastest two-seat pure-electric sports car in the world, and goes on sale across Europe and Asia this winter, although prices have yet to be announced.



Chinese Cherokee



In mid-October, the first Jeep Cherokee rolled off the production line at FCA's Changsha plant in China. The first Cherokees will be powered by the 2.4-litre engine, soon to be followed by a 2.0, with more

Jeep models to follow. Cherokee deliveries to the Chinese market should begin before the end of 2015. Jeep was the first Western manufacturer to produce vehicles in China more than 30 years ago.



Are you likely to
purchase or not driving
car in the future?
Yes
8.8%
No
24.2%
Don't
76.9%

Cunning Stunts



In the recently released film, **Ben Collins: Stunt Driver**, ex-Stig Ben named the new Ford Mustang the ultimate stunt car.

In a series of explosive, high-speed challenges, the racing and Hollywood stunt driver reckoned the 5.0 V8 Mustang beat a raft of other high-performance machinery to the title. "The point of this adventure was to find the perfect car for an epic, high octane, Hollywood-style car

chase, and it's the iconic Ford Mustang that gets top billing," Collins said. "Mustang has starred in many a classic car chase during the past 50 years, and is still the stunt driver's weapon of choice to leave the bad guys standing in a cloud of tyre smoke." The film is out on DVD now.

Tasty...

While Cadillac are busy churning out their muscular and luxurious wares, sister company Buick are busy putting out press releases about how their designers have been turning culinary inspirations into inspirational colours, such as the Chocochino interior in the 2016 Enclave, or the Toasted Coconut Metallic on the 2016 Cascada, or the Crystalline paint on the Avenir concept that was inspired by ... an artichoke.



"People make associations with particular hues based on personal experiences," said Sally Augustin, PhD, founder of Design with Science, and an environmental psychologist specialising in person-centred

design (Okayyy.... - DS). "If you have had a positive experience with a particular food, you can develop positive associations with the colours that are clearly linked to that item, translating into preferences and use in creative projects." Whatever. Sounds like Buick's design team have just found a way of eating at a lot of posh restaurants on expenses to me.

One slightly less daft-sounding release mentions that all 2016 Buicks will have OnStar 4G LTE as standard, and to celebrate, any Buick customer with an active OnStar subscription can claim two free audio books from audiobooks.com via the RemoteLink smartphone app or a live advisor. You could get your Haynes manual read to you...

Pizza The Action

While the custom dream-cars at SEMA might be grabbing the headlines, Chevrolet's Spark will be delivering the goods after it was chosen by Domino's as the basis for the Domino's DXP, a specially designed and built pizza-delivery vehicle.

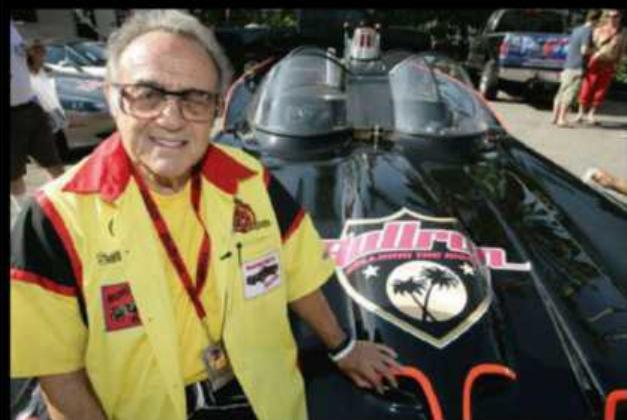
"The Chevrolet Spark is the perfect vehicle to bring our pizza delivery to life," said Russell Weiner, president of Domino's USA. "Not only will the DXP have a warming oven on board and enough storage capacity to hold 80 pizzas in the rear, but the fuel efficiency is something

our franchisees welcome." The vehicle, adapted from a crowd-sourced concept submitted as part of the Domino's Ultimate Delivery Vehicle Challenge, was converted and delivered through a partnership between Domino's and none other than Roush Enterprises.



George Barris

NOVEMBER 20TH, 1925 - NOVEMBER 5TH, 2015



George Barris, legendary vehicle builder, stalwart of the scene, and the guy who put the K in Kustom, passed away peacefully in the early hours of November 5th, at his home, surrounded by his family. He was 89 years old. His son, Brett, posted online that his father had "... moved to the bigger garage in the sky."

Although he had created a myriad of wild vehicles through the years, he was perhaps best known worldwide for the original Sixties Batmobile, the car that was almost as popular as the stars of the show. Other cars Barris created for Hollywood included the

Munsters' Koach, KITT from Knight Rider, and even the Wagon Queen Family Truckster from National Lampoon's Vacation, plus many more. However, he will forever be remembered by fans of the west coast custom scene for his amazing early Mercury sled, the Hirohata Merc, and subsequent, increasingly wild and psychedelic creations that occupied the covers of Hot Rod and the shelves of the local Revell and AMT model kit shops alike.

An inspiration to his generation and those that followed, George will be sorely missed.



Speeding Bulletin

Figures obtained by the IAM show that, over the last decade, speeding is still the biggest motoring-related offence where the defendant is found guilty in court, and those figures have risen sharply - by 28% - over the last 12 months. Insurance-related crime was next on the list, though numbers have fallen sharply.

Winter Is Coming...

Winter is definitely on its way, and nowhere more than at Cadillac, who are celebrating their three new V-series cars - the new CTS-V and first-ever ATS-V Sedan and Coupe - with these exclusive White Frost editions. Wearing low-gloss Crystal Frost White, first seen

at the cars' debut and much remarked upon, they include special V-series wheels plus Carbon Fiber and Luxury packages that are options on the regular V-series models. Only 99 White Frost editions will be made - 29 CTS-Vs, 39 ATS-V Coupes and 31 Sedans.



Crossing Over

Yet more Caddy news concerns the 2017 XT5, first of a new series of four Cadillac luxury crossovers, and one that is again clearly aimed at the big-selling market segment held by BMW. All-new structure and design makes them lightweight, increasing interior space without adding bulk. It will

be powered by the new 310bhp 3.6-litre V6 with FWD or all-wheel drive in the US, with an eight-speed automatic transmission. Production begins in Tennessee in spring 2016, and simultaneously in China where the domestic model will be powered by a 2.0-litre turbo four-pot.



Prize Pony

In early November, the Ford Shelby GT350R Mustang won the title of Road & Track Magazine Performance Car Of The Year by a runaway vote. Its 526bhp, 5.2-litre V8 with flat-plane crank helped it beat the Dodge Viper ACR, the Corvette Z06, the Cadillac ATS-V

Coupe, the Bentley Continental GT3-R, the Porsche Cayman GT4, the Mercedes-AMG GT S and the Ferrari 488GTB on a selection of road and track (naturally) courses. R&T writers called the GT350R, "the Mustang that all Mustangs have been waiting to become."

ROAD & TRACK
PERFORMANCE CAR OF THE YEAR



Touring Circus



There's more new from Cadillac, too, as their range-topping CT6 and CT6 Platinum will begin production in Detroit in January and go on sale in March as 2016 models. The brand new CT6, which stands for Cadillac

Touring Six, puts Cadillac firmly back on the traditional large, luxury sedan map. The range begins with the 2.0-litre turbo and is topped by the all-wheel drive 400bhp 3.0-litre twin-turbo V6.

All The King's Horses

Ford and Petty's Garage have teamed up to build a limited number of highly modified 2016 Mustang GTs - 243 King editions, 43 King Premier and 14 King Premier Convertibles.

Each will feature between 670 and 727 supercharged horsepower, plus a three-year, 36,000-mile warranty. "I've always liked the look of the Mustang, and the 2016 model gives us a great base car to work with," said Richard Petty. "These new King edition Mustangs are pretty much the way I'd build my own. They are great fun to drive, and have a signature

single exhaust. With the new paint on the Premier edition," he added, "that's how you know we built it. They look pretty sharp." The paint on the King Premier includes a custom BASF tri-colour stripe package in red, white and Petty blue, covered in crushed-glass clearcoat. Starting price is \$67,495, and they can be ordered through US Ford dealerships.



According to Auto Trader in the USA, black is the most popular vehicle colour, and the Ford F-150 the most searched-for black vehicle on their website between January and June 2015. While Tuxedo Black is most popular in the mid-west, white is more popular in the south-west and west coast.



The New Generation

At the end of October, the new gen-six Camaros began rolling off the Lansing Grand River Assembly plant production line for delivery to dealerships across the States.

By the time you read this, the coupes should be gleaming in the showrooms; the convertibles and 2.0 models will go into production early next year.



Book Of Dreams



At the same time as the new Camaro hits the streets, so does the 2016 Chevrolet Performance catalogue, which contains plenty of performance upgrades for the new Camaro and Corvette. There's even a brand-new LT4 crate motor, the 650bhp, blown, direct-injected monster from the Z06. What could you put that in?! See www.chevrolet.com/performance-parts-catalog.html.

Desert Storm

While most of the Chevy Performance guys were making a big splash at SEMA, some of them were 60-odd miles down the road in Pahrump, at the Ron Fellows Corvette high-performance driving school, demonstrating some Corvette Stingrays that had been upgraded and retrofitted with Z06 parts from the catalogue.

Ron Fellows, champion Corvette Racing driver, collaborated with Chevrolet Performance engineers on the all-new portfolio. Many will be used in cars in the new Michelin Corvette Challenge racing series, which was developed with Fellows and will run a 15-race schedule starting in February 2016. "Here at Spring Mountain, we drive the Corvette Stingray and Z06 at their limits nearly every day, so we're in a unique position

to recognise the parts that are most effective," said Ron Fellows. "The effect of the new, Z06-based parts on the Stingray's track capability is dramatic. They take the Stingray's already great stopping and cornering capabilities to yet another exciting level of stability and precision." Most parts are direct replacements for the originals. Meanwhile, back in Vegas, Chevrolet Performance were showcasing their Z51 Stingray-

based Track Day concept with half the catalogue chucked at it, although the 460bhp LT1 motor was standard.



Driving Lessons



Talking of back-to-school, the Bob Bondurant School of High Performance Driving in Arizona is now the official high-performance driving school of Dodge/SRT.

All customers who buy or lease a new 2015 or 2016 model SRT will receive one full-day session of professional instruction and track time in the full line of Dodge/SRT vehicles including the Charger and Challenger Hellcats. Participants can combine advanced street driving skills with proven

racing techniques and hours of track time for an unparalleled hands-on experience behind the wheel. Classes will include skid control, accident avoidance, line technique and a lead-and-follow session. Bondurant is currently swapping his entire vehicle fleet for Chargers, Challengers and Vipers.

Lap-Top

The 2016 Dodge Viper ACR was hailed as the undisputed track record king in early November, after the street-legal track day car finished setting SCCA-certified lap records at 13 tracks around the States, including Laguna Seca, Road Atlanta

and VIR. This means that it holds more track records than any other production car in the world. Eleven of the 13 records were set with Chris 'The Wolf' Winkler at the wheel, SRT's own development and dynamics engineer.





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Fuel Bulletin

Ford Performance introduced their 2016 Cobra Jet at the recent SEMA Show in Las Vegas. VP has been named the "official fuel supplier", and each CJ will leave the factory specifically tuned to run on VP's C16 racing fuel, because of its "known, consistent fuel stoichiometry".



ontracknews

THIS MONTH'S RACING AND TRACK NEWS

Elapsed Times

Santa Pod's James Forster gets into the holiday spirit



Christmas comes but once a year, and when it does, people often fly into a flurry of last-minute present-buying. But don't panic. If you're reading this column, it's safe to say that Santa Pod has gifts galore in store for you, from shiny stocking fillers to barrels of racing fuel. Nineteen litres of VP's C12 might not be the romantic choice for every couple, but if the other half's a true-born racer, chances

are she'll love you to bits for it. Still stuck for ideas? Something here will surely do the trick.

As Santa Pod approaches its 50th Anniversary year, its website - www.santapod.com - has an Aladdin's cave of enticing goods and entertainments waiting online. The 2016 calendar is now published, so you have the perfect treat: tickets for a family day out, one of the most spectacular around.

You can print tickets from the internet ready for presentation on Christmas morning. And if you can't quite get it together in time, Early-Bird Discounts are available right through to January 31st, so you can still snap up a bargain even if you've missed the Yuletide deadline. A pre-booked trip to Santa Pod next year will help the winter months hurry by, particularly when under-16s are admitted free. Now there's something to look forward to in the new year.

And if you like to get in early and avoid the rush, we have a special just for you: "The Twelve Deals Of Christmas" - running from December 1st to 12th, Santa Pod will offer a fresh new deal each day, with as much as 50% off selected merchandise lines. Perfect timing, or what?

Deal or no deal, Santa Pod offers a huge range of goodies to choose from - clothing, souvenirs,

collectibles. Kids, and even Big Kids, will love the scale models of cars of the quarter-mile stars. Missed any races, or keen to relive the great ones you attended? We have an array of DVDs to keep you informed and entertained through the long dark winter nights. Clothing? Garments for all the family, to keep you warm and dry through the winter and cool and stylish in the balmy summer months. Just need a stocking filler or two? Well, there's enough fun and games here to fill any self-respecting pillowcase. In short, Santa Pod has a crackerjack solution to all your Christmas gift worries. And if you still can't make up your mind, a Gift Voucher will do the job for you. And you thought we were just a dragstrip! Pay us a visit online or give us a call at 01234 782828. And a very Merry Christmas and Happy 50th Anniversary New Year from all of us to all of you.

The Sportsman

Shakespeare County's Jerry Cookson looks at a local hero

This month I'm particularly looking forward to the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame Gala Evening taking place at the Savill Court Hotel, Windsor. In addition to the who's who of British, European and Worldwide drag racing who will be taking centre stage at this momentous occasion, we will be celebrating this year's inductees: John Clift from the world of drag bike racing, SPRC's long-standing official Yvonne Tramm, and a very dear friend to my own family since the early Sixties, Mr Ken 'Flathead' Cooper.

A resident of my old home town of Sutton Coldfield, my dad Gerry Cookson knew Ken when he started building his first BMC Dragster in the mid-Sixties. Ken would be a frequent visitor to our garage and vice versa, being just down the road, so to speak. But before Ken's first dragster, Bazooka, appeared on the scene in 1959 he owned a '37 Ford coupe, which he soon turned into a hot rod by adding a 1941 Mercury flathead with dual exhausts and lowered front suspension.

Ken was one of the first members of the British Hot Rod Association and at the first AGM was elected as Midlands Division secretary. He also formed a local Hot Rod club known as the 'Roadrunners'.

In 1967, Ken replaced the original Bazooka with a longer wheelbase Bazooka Too, which later led to his final dragster 'Blast from the Past' in 1981. He was a key figure in the British Flathead Racers Association. His best times were 10.68 at 132mph, not bad for a flathead even by today's standards.

Fortunately for all of us, Ken's tireless enthusiasm and passion for the sport he helped create 56 years ago hasn't gone away. Today, 72-year-old Ken is still very much active with his son Bradley's dragster entitled Back From The Past powered by, what else? A Flathead, of course. I always go out of my way to have a chat with Ken and Bradley, and likewise Ken always asks me how my parents are. So it will be great to see Ken and family at the awards evening and to see



him inducted into this great drag racing institution: the British Drag Racing Hall of Fame.



Black Sun Racing

Alex Peters contemplates one fifth of a second at September's Brighton Speed Trials



The Brighton Speed trials is a prestigious and historic event, jointly the longest-running motorsport event in the UK with the Shelsley Walsh hillclimb, both starting in 1905. This year I was up against a massive class of 41 cars, including a couple of big-turbo Toyota Supras, Porsche 911 GT3s, a 1965 Shelby GT350, Corvette Z06, Dodge Viper, modified E-types, a Ferrari F40, TVR Griffith, and a couple of other S197 Mustangs, including a supercharged Roush. It was great to see some of Black Sun Racing's sponsors come to visit us in the paddock though, including Jim from Eyesite and Greg from Peter Taylor Insurance.

I was very conscious that last year my performance at the end

of the run was very good, with a terminal speed of 144mph putting me in the top 25% of drag racers (according to the MOCGB website); however, the launch was very poor (in the bottom 25%). I put this partly down to the poor state of the Brighton track, compared with dedicated drag strips, but still needed to improve. I didn't touch the settings on the KW suspension, but lowered the tyre pressures to 24psi from the usual 32psi. I normally race with the roof down as it gives much better track visibility, but in this case decided to leave it up to minimise drag.

Just before the start of the event it rained quite hard, making the track slippery, so on my first practice run I chose to do a

burnout ahead of the start line. I don't do this all the time in order to save on tyre wear, particularly in practice. Bearing in mind the wheel-spinning launch I made in 2014, I held only 3,000rpm before dropping the clutch. It didn't work out, I still pulled away slowly with lots of spin. Worse, I hit the rev limiter in first, second and third before changing up, wasting even more time. I was fairly annoyed, until I saw the results - only 0.2 seconds slower than my 2014 time of 13.27 seconds, and fourth in class.

For the first timed run - which would count for championship points - the track was drying out in the sun. If I could run that quick in slippery conditions and making so many mistakes, I could

actually win my class if I got it together! I did a great burnout on the line to cheering crowds, and my heart was pounding with adrenaline as I lined up on the start. I was more conservative with the revs and engaged the clutch smoothly, getting a great launch - 2.34 seconds over 64 feet, a small-sounding but significant improvement over my 2.49 in practice, and better than many of the four-wheel-drive cars were managing! I quickly flicked my eyes to the rev counter for each gear change, slamming the selector through the gate before the engine hit the limiter. It felt great as I crossed the line.

When I returned to the paddock I was horrified to see this run was fractionally slower than practice, 13.43 seconds against 13.42. I could not understand it - I would have thought that holding the engine on the limiter would lose time as the engine revs would be past peak torque and I would not be accelerating any more. I should be philosophical at having beaten so many impressive cars, so fourth place was a real achievement. However, what really upset me was that despite having got the launch right, the end result was 0.2 seconds slower than the year before. One positive thing was that I didn't suffer any gear change problems, which I had been expecting, so that was a bonus. The other bit of good news was that I had scored enough points to move up from fourth to third place in the 41-car championship.

Find Alex at www.blacksunracing.co.uk or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/BlackSunRacing

Stocks Shares

Anyone following the NASCAR Whelen Euro Series, Europe's NASCAR sibling that stars at the Brands Hatch American Speedfest, will be keen to check out the new car for the 2016 series. Unveiled at the EuroNASCAR finals at Zolder in October, it not only boasts a new body and aerodynamics package that more closely mirrors the American NASCARs. The series has also announced its six-venue, eight-race calendar for 2016, and you can find out more at <http://hometracks.nascar.com/series/whelen-euro-series>.



Rounds 1 & 2

April 22nd-24th, Valencia, Spain - road course

Rounds 3 & 4

May 14th-16th, Venray, Holland - oval

Rounds 5 & 6

June 10th-12th, Brands Hatch, UK - road course

Rounds 7 & 8

June 24th-26th, Tours, France - oval

Semi-finals

September 16th-18th, Adria, Italy - road course

Finals

October 7th-9th, Zolder, Belgium - road course



auctionnews

THIS MONTH'S AUCTION NEWS IN THE WORLD OF AMERICAN CARS

Sold In 60 Seconds



Visitors to the NEC's Lancaster Insurance Classic Motor Show, which takes place as this mag goes to print, will be treated to two days of all-classic hammer action from Silverstone Auctions.

At the time of writing, there's nothing American among Saturday's 50-lot catalogue, but the Sunday auction sees this lovely '71 Corvette going under the hammer. A black ragtop beauty with a four-speed, dyno-proven 386bhp 350 small-block and extensive refurbishment means they're expecting between £24,000 and £28,000. No classic auction is complete

without a Mustang, and this one is a rather handsome '67 GT fastback "Eleanor evocation". This S-code car features a fuel-injected 427, a Tremec five-speed and lots of hot stuff, and is expected to bring in the region of £70,000. There's also a fully restored '66 ragtop with a 289, five-speed, rack and pinion steering and upgraded brakes on a rotisserie-restored

shell that's estimated in the £30,000-35,000 area.

Incidentally, Silverstone Auctions have announced their 2016 classic auction calendar, beginning with the Race Retro sale at Stoneleigh on February 27th and 28th, followed by the Practical Classics Restoration and Classic Car Show sale, back at the NEC on March 6th. They'll be back at home at

Silverstone for the Silverstone Classic over the weekend of July 29th to 31st, then off to Blenheim for the Salon Privé sale on September 2nd. There's the all-Porsche sale at Silverstone on October 15th before they're back to the NEC for next year's Classic Motor Show on November 12th and 13th! See www.silverstoneauctions.com for details.

Bristol Fashion

Charterhouse had their biggest classic sale to date, with in excess of 100 classics taking to the block at the Footman James Bristol Classic Vehicle Restoration Show at Royal Bath and West Showground on November 8th.

Among them was a handsome Ford Ranger pick-up, listed in the catalogue as a 1996, although it's one of the 1989-1992 models on a J-plate, though this was withdrawn before the sale. The obligatory Mustang was a '65 ragtop in white, fresh in from California and as yet unregistered, with just 60,000 on the clock, but that didn't sell. A rather handsome '74 Pontiac Firebird sounded a bit of a bargain, complete with new 400bhp crate motor, Tremec

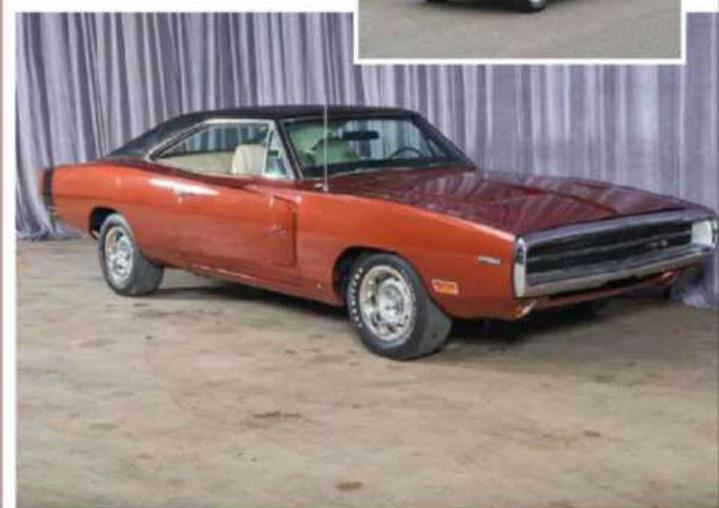
five-speed and many thousands of pounds-worth of upgrade goodies that sold in the room at £14,500, while a 'patina' '51 Chevy 3100 on a V6 S10 chassis and running gear sold for £6,000 to an online bidder. What seems like the biggest (literally) bargain of the day was a '69 Plymouth Fury III, an original right-hooking four-door, that found a new owner at just £3,000. See www.charterhouse-auction.com for their next sale.



World Of Muscle

The recent Worldwide Auction sale of the Ron Brown Estate Collection was a stunning success, some of the standouts including a 1959 Chevrolet Impala convertible at \$123,750, a '63 Corvette at \$170,500, a '69 Camaro RS/SS Pace Car at \$62,700, a '70 Charger R/T Hemi at \$132,000 and a '70 Mustang 428CJ Mach I R-code fastback that brought \$110,000. Top spot

went to a '70 Plymouth Hemi Cuda at a whopping \$220,000. Their next big sale will be the Houston Classic Auction on April 23rd, 2016, so see www.worldwide-auctioneers.com for details.



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

Send us a message on Facebook or drop us a tweet on Twitter

Drag-Gone

Remember the ex-Danny La Rue right-hooking '72 Mustang we mentioned last month? It sold at Fleet Auctions' October 29th sale for £18,200



Two Little Indians

At Mecum's Chicago event in October, the biggest seller in the massive catalogue was, predictably, a 2005 Ford GT with fewer than 7,000 miles on the clock that hammered for a whopping \$230,000, but it's the following two that are quite telling.

A 1970 Pontiac GTO Judge Ram Air IV coupe with the 370bhp, 400-cube engine and four-speed 'box went for a handsome \$160,000, while third was a beautiful, unrestored '69 Trans Am with the 335bhp 400 and four-speed at a tremendous \$127,500. That's a good showing for Pontiac muscle. Further down the bill was a 1987 Buick GNX with just 16 miles on the clock that brought \$112,500. Bargain.

Mecum's last auction of 2015 is the 600-car Austin, Texas sale on December 11th to 12th, but then they'll be gearing up for the annual 3,000-car, 10-day whopper in Kissimmee from January 15th to 24th. There, alongside the usual Ferraris and Hemis, will be two of the eight 1969 Pontiac Trans Am convertibles built - let's see how they fare. See www.mecum.com for details.



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THE **BIG** PICTURE





1966 Ford GT40 MkII

There's much fuss currently about the new EcoBoost-powered Ford GT and its return to the FIA GT Endurance championships in 2016. Obviously, Ford are looking to mark the 50th anniversary of the original car's victory at Le Mans in 1966, but perhaps hoping for a repeat of the full podium 1-2-3 finish is a bit optimistic.

GET IN TOUCH

Is the 1966 GT40 just about the most beautiful sports car ever made?

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WIN! A CAMARO FOR A DAY!



American Car Magazine in association with American Car Hire Ltd can offer one lucky winner the ultimate Christmas present - A fifth-gen Chevrolet Camaro for a day!

Turn to page 41 and you can read all about American Car Hire Ltd and their fleet of four self-drive hire Camaros, from the stealthy, stock V6 to the mighty, blown V8. If you fancy getting yourself behind the wheel of one, there are three ways of going about it:

1. Call them on 01268 575575 or see the website at www.hireacamaro.co.uk, give them your credit or debit card number, and book yourself a Camaro experience.
2. Drop some major hints around the house that Christmas isn't far away, and what you'd really like

is a Camaro of your very own, perhaps casually mentioning that Gift Vouchers are available...

3. Enter this simple competition, then cross your fingers and hope.

One lucky winner gets a golden ticket to head off to American Car Hire Ltd in Rayleigh, Essex, pick the Camaro of their choice, and then keep it from 10am one morning until 10am the next. Of course, there are terms and conditions - see below - but there's no mileage limit and you're free to go where you will. Go cruising, impress your kids, maybe head to the Ace Cafe, or just put a lot of Super Unleaded to the use for which it was designed.

Entering couldn't be easier. Just check the Ts and Cs below, then send us your name, address, phone number and email address one of the following ways:

- By email to competitions@americanarmagazine.com with Camaro Competition in the subject line.
- By following the Competitions link from our website, www.americanarmagazine.com.
- By putting it on a postcard and sending it to Hire A Camaro Competition at the office address on page three.
- Via the link on American Car Hire Ltd's own website at www.hireacamaro.co.uk.

The usual rules apply - see page three - and you can only enter once each. The competition closes at noon on January 31st, 2016, the winner will be selected at random and notified forthwith. It's that easy! Best of luck, and start planning where you'll take your Camaro now.

Ts&Cs: Anyone can enter this competition, but anyone wishing to drive the Camaro must be at least 25 years of age, with a full UK driving licence that they have held for at least two years, and with no more than six current penalty points showing. The prize will consist of a free rental agreement for 24 hours on a weekday of your choice in 2016, arranged in advance with American Car Hire Ltd. There is no cash alternative. A fully refundable credit or debit card deposit may be required for insurance purposes. You will be covered for the duration of the 24-hour period by American Car Hire Ltd's insurance cover, which carries the same exclusions as most regular policies. Please see the Terms and Conditions on www.hireacamaro.co.uk for any further details.

letters

WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO SAY ON ALL THINGS AMERICAN CAR



Dear ACM,

Things for me were going well until, one day, I looked at my Trans Am and thought, let's tidy it up and give it a proper going over, bodywork, electrics, interior, the lot. So up goes the gazebo, bonnet off, inner wings, outer wings, doors off... you kinda forget how heavy a door is! Anyway, this is what I found. Well, I almost cried! Someone had done a bad bodge (see pics), and I'm going to have to weld it up properly. Why is nothing ever straightforward? Did I mention that I hate rust?!

Andy Grady, via email



Okay, hands up how many of you out there can relate to this. What, all of you?! Yes, the bodgers are among us. Repairing rust and damage is one thing, but having to undo a bodge-job and do it all again properly is quite another. We feel for you, Andy. What's the most breathtaking bodge you've ever come across on one of your cars? Tell us, and the one that makes us the most forehead-slappingly incredulous will win a prize! Addresses on page three. DS, ACM



Each month, the Star Letter will receive a New Car Kit of premium car care products courtesy of Meguiar's, with everything you need for a 'new car shine'.

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www.corvette.co.uk

Black Art

It was first time unlucky for this guy, but now it's definitely back in black.

Words: Dave Smith **Photography:** Matt Woods





You've gotta love the Mustang. They're one of the few American cars that have properly crossed over into the mainstream, and not just thanks to Frank Bullitt and Memphis Raines, but also thanks to the likes of Alan Mann, Roy Pierpoint and Frank Gardner. Now, if you asked any classic car fan to name a classic American car, I bet nine out of every 10 would instantly reply, "Ford Mustang".

It's no bad thing. They're good cars, and their popularity is keeping both prices and profile high, and when that happens, specialists and aftermarket companies crop up to ensure that parts supply is plentiful, while the internet is full of information useful to restorers. In fact, you could build yourself a brand-new Mustang from all the repro parts available, and that's pretty much what happened here ... although that wasn't the plan.

This piano-black stunner belongs to Steve Dance, from Staffordshire, and,

You know how clean and straight bodywork has to be to look good in black, so imagine how much work went into this body to look this good (below). See it in the flesh, and that paint just looks liquid. Not bad at all considering that the vast majority of the panels needed replacing... as did almost the entire interior (right). It's an original three-pedaller, anyway.

believe it or not, it's his first American car. "I've done a few cars over the years," says Steve. "I had a Spitfire in my teens, then a TR7, and so on. They were all cars that just needed a bit of work, a spot of welding or an engine repair. I've always loved the Ford Capri, but then I saw the Mustang. And it had to be a '67, the shape I like the most. A long way down the line, I decided I wanted an S-code 390 GT Fastback, and it had to be a four-speed. I didn't want an Eleanor or a Bullitt clone, and I wasn't bothered what colour it was as I always knew it was going to be black and chrome. I wanted to do my own thing, but keep it otherwise original. I didn't know much about them other than that I

loved the shape, so I started investigating from there.

"I'd been looking for about a year when I found this one on eBay in the States. It had been painted red, and the owner said it was a runner that didn't need much; it looked good, complete and pretty much ready to go. He sent me lots of photos and I sent him an offer. That was about two and a half years ago. I didn't have a clue how to go about importing a car, so I just phoned Southampton docks! An old guy answered and put me in touch with a company that had offices on the docks, Wallenius Wilhelmsen. They collected the car from Missouri, shipped it, and did all the paperwork, and I had the car at my door within a month. →

"I didn't have a clue how to go about importing a car, so I just phoned Southampton docks!"





"The problems began when the VIN numbers didn't match the numbers on the title papers. The number on the Missouri DMV papers didn't even exist as a Mustang - there was an extra zero in it - so I got in touch and they admitted they'd made a typo. I got the correct papers sent to me, then I had to take them along to the DVLA because I was told I couldn't just post them... in the end it took seven months to sort out!"

"When the car was delivered, I was up on my roof fixing some tiles, and I saw it coming up the road on a trailer. It looked great from 50 yards, but as it got closer I saw that the paint job was really amateur. I rolled it into my garage, and began working on it that day, stripping bits off, cataloguing them and storing them in the shed. I'm quite impulsive like that! For years I've worked really hard, 80 to 100 hours a week, enough working hours to last me well into my seventies, and for the last 10 years I'd been running my own business. I had recently sold the business, so I decided I was going to take a six-month break to work on the Mustang.

"As I was taking bits off the car, I was just thinking, 'That's not right' or 'That doesn't look right.' I'd done lots of research on the internet, finding and studying detailed pictures and exploded diagrams, so I knew it didn't look right although I didn't know what I was looking at or what it was called! In the end, all I reused from the car was the seat frames, the dash, the steering wheel, a couple of gauges, the handbrake lever, the rear axle, the bumpers, a few bits of trim, the bonnet

For droolworthy fastback shape, the classic Mustang is still hard to beat. That bumper (right) is one of the few original parts reused, though the chrome needed renewing. Likewise the front bumper (top right). That plate is true, anyway - it's a genuine S-code 390 GT - but previous owners had been less than diligent in its preservation. The 390 FE engine (below) was bought as a ready-built, correctly date-coded unit following a chance conversation with a guy selling an alternator!

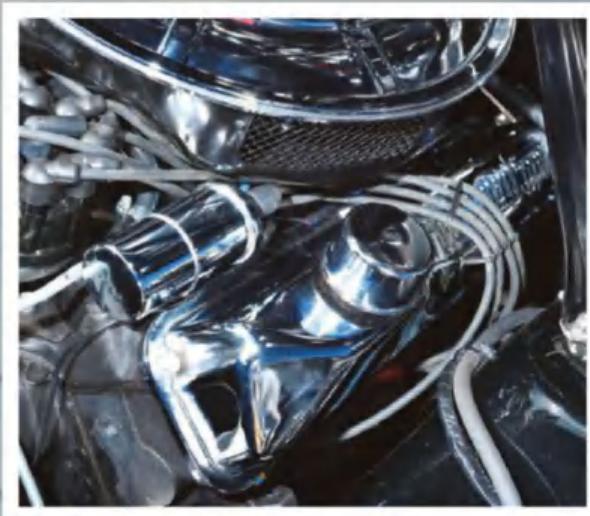
and the boot lid. All I had bought was a VIN number and a lot of rusty parts. I probably reused about seven percent of the original car; everything else was renewed or changed.

"A friend of mine has a bead blasting set-up, so we blasted the shell. So much of it was irreparable - it was rusty, full of filler and so badly dented, one rear quarter looked as though a digger had run down it. I started getting new panels together, all Ford parts wherever possible, because I didn't want there to be any filler in the car at all. I bought wings, doors, floors, inner arches, quarter panels, the tail panel, even the roof! I'd spent six months stripping, labelling, bare-metalling and collecting parts, but that's when I realised that I could never do it all myself.

"My friend Andy has a large bodyshop, Lichfield Accident Repair Centre, and he told me if I brought the car to his workshops I could work on it there, use his tools and so on. He said I'd be doing most of the work, but he'd be 'guiding' me. We had it on a jig to keep it straight, as everything was out of line. I'd replaced the floorpans, but they'd already been done once, very badly. I had tacked most of the panels in place, but LARC has a spot welder, and one of the guys there could lead-load, and made a brilliant job of it. I wanted to keep the car to original spec, so when there was no work to do at LARC I was on the 'net sourcing original parts. The internet is great, and there are some terrific people out there, some really helpful people, but also some who are downright rude and some who are just out to rip you off. →

"All I had bought was a VIN number and a lot of rusty parts. I probably reused about seven percent of the original car"





"The engine that was in the car was supposedly a reconditioned 390, but when I decoded the numbers, the block and heads were Seventies parts, the gearbox was a three-speed with overdrive and the exhaust manifolds were off a truck! I wanted all original '67 parts, and managed to source them via the US, Germany, Australia, everywhere. I found a chap called Vern in the States when I was looking for a reconditioned '67 alternator. I bought it from him, we got chatting, and he asked me how I was getting on with the project. I mentioned I wanted a year-correct engine and he told me he'd just built an all-correct 390 but he'd sold it to a guy in Germany who had a buyer for it. He sent me photos, and it was perfect, just what I wanted, so he spoke to his German friend who said their buyer had never turned up so I could have it if I wanted! I was very

conscious that the body was just a few weeks from being finished and, as yet, I had no engine. I paid the chap, and within six days the engine was at LARC! He'd driven it all the way from Germany. It was exactly as described, but it was Ford blue, so I went around it removing all the nuts and bolts, painting it black, then replacing them with brand new fasteners. Vern also found me a genuine 390 four-speed in the States, and told me where to get a rebuild kit from. I must have ordered 4,000 individual items for that car, and I was still finding bits I was missing.

"Once the panels were fitted and aligned, we refitted the basic running gear to get it rolling and rolled it down to the prep guy. The prep guy was called 'Rabbit', and he knew the car was going to be black and worked so hard to get it perfect. Mark was going to paint it, just straight black but I wanted the

It's not the original colour; nor are those the original wheels, and there's more chrome on the engine than Ford ever put there, but otherwise this car is pretty close to stock (below). The fact that it gleams black like a hole in the universe doesn't hurt its appeal one bit, though. Steve (bottom) calls it 'beauty and the beast' - it certainly has a big dollop of each, and he can now enjoy them both.

finish to be like glass, and Mark wanted it to be the best car that had ever left LARC. Everyone at LARC had an ownership of the car, they'd all watched it take shape, and Mark put so much care into the paint. He did an awesome job, with six coats of lacquer. Later, I was fitting the trim around the windscreens and it pinged off one of the clips and scratched the paint. I could have cried, but Mark put his arm around me and said, 'Don't worry, we can fix that.' Half an hour later, the scratch was gone.

"When the engine was fitted, the whole of LARC just stopped - there were 20 or 30 guys just watching as the key went in the ignition. It fired up as soon as the petrol reached the carburettor, and everyone was just delighted. We had a few issues to begin with, but it never left LARC until it was just right. For instance, I took it for a test drive and found I could change up the gearbox but not down. Even so, I had such a smile on my face; it didn't feel real. I'd put about 4,000 hours into it and it was gleaming and perfect, there wasn't a bolt or a washer on the car that I hadn't put there myself. It was a real accomplishment, but I couldn't have done it without a bunch of guys like LARC. For example, Lee, the LARC mechanic, came over to me while I was fitting the flywheel and pointed out that there was no pilot bush in the crank. I didn't know! I got one the very next day from Real Steel. Incidentally, the problem with the gearshift turned out to be a broken horseshoe washer in the gearbox.

"Had I tried to do the whole project on my own, I expect I'd have ended up just selling the whole thing as an unfinished project at a huge loss. Jobs like adjusting the panel gaps on the doors and wings is not a one-man job, and I wanted them perfect. I spoke to one chap on an American forum who worked on the production lines in the Sixties, and he said that not one Mustang left the factory with anything like perfect panel gaps! There are some really good, helpful people out there; I've just forgotten the bad.

"This is my first and last restoration. I've really enjoyed it, but I wouldn't do it again, and to anyone thinking of bringing their own project in from the States I'd say do it, but get a full inspection done first. Now the only non-original-spec part of the car is the colour and the wheels. People call the car 'she', but it's not a he or a she. It's beauty and the beast; it's a beautiful beast! You need calf muscles like Popeye's to push the clutch, and with that big V8 snarling away it's definitely not a 'she'.

"I'm definitely keeping it - it's my pension! All my money is in that car, it's a very personal car to me, and has taken two years of my life. Even so, it's not a garage queen, and I'm going to get some use out of it." **ACM**

"This is my first and last restoration. I've really enjoyed it, but I wouldn't do it again"





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THE CRUISE BROTHERS

Two brothers, three Cruise Muscle machines, and plenty of smiles per pound. Good recipe.

Words: Dave Smith Photography: Si Parish

We all love outrageous American cars; the high-dollar restorations, or those running motors so powerful that they could reverse the rotation of the earth. But owning such a car can be more of a test of strength than a barrel of laughs. Having to think twice about taking your car out in case it rains, or in case someone gets too close and marks the paint, or knowing that the motor is so highly stressed that it's one throttle blip away from catastrophic failure and subsequent bankruptcy can spoil the whole experience. Do you ever wonder whether John Force ever thinks, "Being a champion is great, but one weekend I'd just like to do RWYB and have a few beers with my mates"?

Sometimes, the most fun can be had at the budget end of the scale. It seems there's no such thing as a truly cheap Yank any more, but there are

still sensibly priced machines that make you part of the scene without putting you in the poorhouse. Owning a car that means the world to you doesn't mean that you're frightened of supermarket car parks, and there's a chance you can fill the fuel tank on payday and still have some money left on Monday.

Here are two Kentish brothers epitomising that spirit. From the long-term classic to the future classic to the tough, daily-drivable beater, Alan and Jonathan Saunders and their GM-tastic machines have got Cruise Muscle covered.

"Back in the early Eighties, we went to Lydden Hill where they had a few American cars and some drag racing on the main straight," says Alan. "I'd been a bike guy in my teens, but there I saw a Firebird, in matt black, and it was affordable. That sowed the seeds,

"It changed my whole outlook. I went straight home and put my MkIII Cortina up for sale!"

The third-gen Camaro is about to come into its own, I reckon. And why not? This is a handsome car, with T-tops and those deep-dish IROC wheels filling the arches, plus a V8 under the bonnet (far right). And they're currently one of the most affordable ways into American muscle.



I'd never seen one close up before, and it changed my whole outlook. I went straight home and put my MkIII Cortina up for sale! I bought myself a '74 Firebird Esprit, and put a 455 in, back when you could find them reasonably cheaply. I ended up keeping that car for 20 years, but then I found myself using it less and less until I eventually sold it back in 2001. I took a break from American cars for nearly 10 years, but I always missed it.

"Back in 2010, I wanted another. I had a couple of grand as a budget, and it had to have a V8. I found this Camaro, which was up for £2,400; it was a little bit tatty and needed a bit of work but it ran fine, and you don't get much for a couple of grand. It's a 1988 RS with T-tops, a 305 V8 and five-speed manual, nothing fancy, but I had a big mortgage at the time and of all the cars I'd seen, this was the nicest.

"I've done about 10,000 miles in it since then, including to Le Mans and the Spa Classic and back, and you get up to 30mpg thanks to that fifth gear. The most money I've spent on it was having a true dual custom 2.5-inch stainless exhaust system built for it at Fast Road Conversions in Ashford. It has straight-through silencers, so I don't drive too fast for too long as it gets noisy, but so far the law and the neighbours haven't objected! The other money I spent was on a full set of IROC wheels and new tyres, and at the price I got them for I didn't object to driving up to Scunthorpe for them! The car had been lowered by a previous owner and rides quite firm, so these →



"I don't drive too fast for too long as it gets noisy, but so far the law and the neighbours haven't objected!"



16-inch wheels with 32mm spacers on the back have transformed the appearance.

"The drivetrain and underneath is mostly stock. I disconnected the smog pump and plumbing when the exhausts were done, and it's surprising how many underbonnet rattles that cured! I had to do the clutch a while ago, and when it started overheating I replaced the radiator with an aluminium one with an electric fan and a cooler-opening thermostat and that cured it. Other than that it's just been servicing. It's had a bit of welding in the rear arches, the battery tray, the usual spots, but the whole floorpan was just bare metal! I spent a couple of weekends underneath it with a wire brush in the grinder and a tin of Rust Bullet paint about five years ago, and there's been no more rust since. It's not a fun job, though, as it's impossible to get it off if you make a mistake, and I had it in my hair for weeks!"

"The Camaro was supposed to be an all-year car, but now it's garaged and kept away from the salt; I think once a car gets to 25 years old it



needs a bit more protection from the elements. I started thinking about something a bit more durable for our climate, something that could live outside, possibly a pick-up. I built up a picture of what I wanted in my head, then, in June 2014, I found this truck on eBay. It's a 1984 C10, and it was in Florida. I had a to and fro with the guy, who sent me a load of photos. It had a good chassis, the body was solid, it had been stored under cover for the last 10 years and the old 305 had been replaced with a 350. It was an auto, with column shift and a bench seat so I could get the grandkids in - they love it! I liked the stepside, I liked the black paint, and it had patina which may get lacquered but it will never have shiny paint as it lives outside and goes everywhere.

"I hit 'buy it now' at £2,400, the same as I'd paid for the Camaro. I phoned Hill Shipping, who are quite close to me, and they arranged it all. I only needed to call them once or twice, and



from buying it to it turning up on my drive only took about a month. It was smooth and painless.

"It was solid enough - it needed cab corners, but it was a 30-year-old truck - but it didn't run well, and wouldn't pass an emissions test because it was misfiring so badly. I spoke to a local guy, Tony Stamp, a well-known drag racer, who told me the engine was worn out. He took it away and told me that it was knackered, the camshaft was shot, the timing chain was stretched, and one of the heads was cracked. It was on its last legs; I'm glad I had it delivered from Southampton docks, it wouldn't have made it on its own! Tony completely rebuilt it, fitting a pair of second-hand heads he had, a new Holley carburettor, a new alternator and Hedman headers. I had a custom exhaust built by Zero Exhausts, with an X-pipe, cut-outs, and the tailpipes ahead of the rear wheels. Tony reckons the engine should be about 300bhp, and hopefully I'll get it on a rolling road one day. One of the hardest parts of owning an American car is finding good people to work on them, and I'm so glad I found Tony.

"I bought the wheels a while ago on a whim. They're a set of old Centerline Indy Champ 500s, and I thought they'd suit the Camaro but they're just too big. I thought they might suit a pick-up, so I had to buy a truck to suit! That's one of the reasons I picked this truck. You see those trucks in the States with huge rims and low-profile tyres; I don't like that, I prefer a nice big sidewall. Since the photos were taken, I've fitted some All-Terrain tyres, which help me get up to 18mpg on longer trips. Tony's currently building me an axle with a locker after I got stuck off-road with the open diff. He said when he took the diff cover off it was full of mud and water, so it may have been used to tow a boat at some point. The original

gears were 2.52:1, but Tony's fitting 2.73:1. It's definitely for cruising, not drag racing, though hopefully I won't be getting stuck in the mud!

"The Camaro was bought and run on a tight budget, but by the time I bought the truck, the mortgage was paid hence there was more money free to buy a rebuilt engine and axle. I also fitted all new brakes and steering linkages, so I can go anywhere in it ... if I've enough money left for fuel! Tony's also clear-coating the bonnet and sealing and cavity-waxing the bulkhead, just protecting it, really. I'm going to have the seat recovered, some sound deadening, maybe even a stereo! It's a very basic truck, but it's now just how I want it.

"On reflection, maybe I should have viewed it in the States and had some of the work done over there, but I don't think I'd have saved much and it may have cost more on the import duty. Now I'm back on the scene, and it's a brilliant feeling. I used to go up to Santa Pod in the Eighties and Nineties; now we're back, and the scene's stronger than ever with some younger guys getting involved. I'm glad it's not just us old boys!"

Alan's brother, Jonathan, was with Alan on that day at Lydden Hill. It must have made an impression, as he's had his Trans Am quite a while now!

"I bought the Pontiac back in 1992 at ➔



"I'm glad I had it delivered from Southampton docks, it wouldn't have made it on its own!"





Beaulieu Autojumble," says Jonathan. It was a 1981, 4.9 turbo and was just parked in the car park with a 'for sale' sign in the window. It was being sold by a finance company, and nobody really knew who owned it! It was a very difficult purchase, but once we found the lady who owned it, I paid, got the receipt, and the log book came through a few weeks later. I could quite easily have given up during the process, but I'm glad I stuck with it.

"It was really solid, apart from a little rust on the front wing, and the engine was smoking because the seals in the turbo had gone. I replaced the turbo, and had the heads rebuilt by American Autoparts back when they were in Thornton Heath, but it never ran right, and the turbo lag was horrible. The 301 is a hateful engine, so I pulled it and stored it - it's the numbers-matching engine - and went and bought a Pontiac 400, which had been rebuilt and warmed over, and a TH400 gearbox.

"I recently replaced the rear springs and shocks, but it only has around 65,000 miles on the clock. It had 49,000 when I bought it, so I've only put 16,000 miles on it. All I've done is kept it running and kept it used - I've never thought of changing it and probably never will. I'll probably just look after it so I can pass it on to my daughters who are keen to keep it. It's always a popular choice for picking them up from school or driving them to parties! There's still no rust underneath, just a little starting to come through on the door frames in the usual places, and keeping it rust-free is the important thing. These cars were never built to last. I had a '74 Camaro in 1984 when it was just 10 years old, and it was on its last legs then; they always rusted if you let them.

"The bodywork's definitely the important part, as the mechanical side of them is very easy. When we had our extension built, I built the garage

Jonathan's car is the last of the second-gen Trans Ams. It was built when 'turbo' was the hot new buzzword; unfortunately, there's very little love for the rather feeble 301 Turbo motor these days. Jon had his replaced with this warmed-over 400 (top left) about 20 years ago and it's still going strong! Other than that, the car's mostly stock original, and a cool Cruise Muscle ride that's only going up in value.



"I built the garage around the car - I got my priorities right!"

around the car - I got my priorities right! I just plan to enjoy it while petrol is relatively cheap and insurance is affordable. It's gone up in value massively since I bought it, so it was a good investment, and if you can have fun out of something and still make money on it, you're doing well!" **ACM**

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'Tis The Season

Ho, ho, hell's bells, it's Christmas again. It can hardly be a surprise - according to my local supermarkets, Christmas started the second the kids went back to school in September.

Whether you're one of those joyous people who are overflowing with the Christmas spirit or one of those curmudgeonly old gits like me who would rather stuff a swarm of killer bees up my bottom than listen to one more dose of Mistletoe And Wine from

Cliff, the fact is it's time to buy presents for those you love. And for those you couldn't give a burning turd for for 11.5 months of the year but you'll buy them a Christmas present anyway. If those you love are of a petrol-flavoured, tyre-frying disposition,

here are a few ideas that are even better than those you can buy at the all-night petrol station on Christmas Eve. Or, if you're the petrolhead in question, here are a few hints that you can drop to those around you that perhaps you have quite enough novelty

socks, and the last time you wore a tie was when you appeared before the magistrates for doing a rolling burnout for the entire length of the High Street in 1997, so you're unlikely to need another. Happy Christmas, and the best of luck to you.

Words: Dave Smith

Calendar

You can count off the days until the next joyous festive season with this extremely cool retro pin-up calendar from Valley Gas Speed Shop. It's A3 size, all shot on location at Valley Gas, and features not only the coolest hot rods but the finest vintage-style glamour girls - in fact, this is a test of how old you are: if you can look at these lovely ladies, shot by Tony

Nylons, and the first thing you think is, "Eeeh, they'll catch their death of cold dressed like that in a draughty garage," then congratulations, you're old! The 2016 calendar is available from the Valley Gas shop in Andover, through their website at www.valleygasspeedshop.com, or via their Facebook page for £14.99 plus p&p where applicable. Have a very happy new year...



Garages

Winter is coming, as they say in House Stark, and working outside is no fun. If you don't have the luxury of a permanent garage, protect your car and yourself from anything winter can throw at you with a heavy-duty Clarke instant garage. Triple-layered, woven, waterproof and rip-proof UV-treated fabric

covers a bolt-together powder-coated steel frame, and ratchet-strap tensioning means no need for guy ropes. It's everything a driveway mechanic could want, and in a variety of sizes up to 24' long by 12' wide, you won't want for space. See www.machinemart.co.uk or drop in at one of their stores.



Sofa

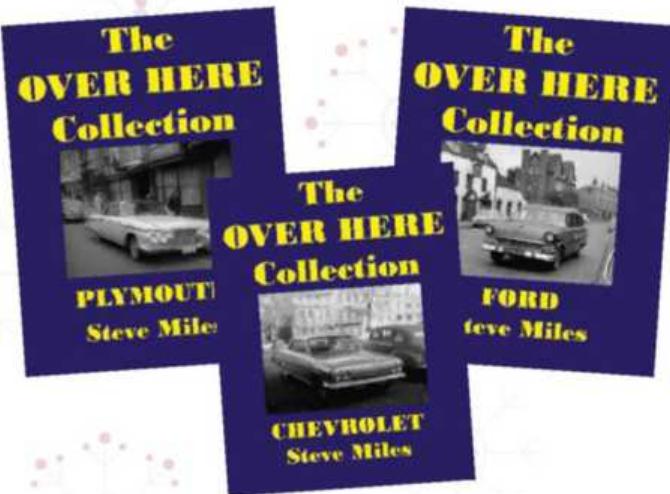
Furniture is an unusual present, and it'd be a bugger to gift wrap, but there can't be much finer for dressing the man-cave than the Cobra Classic sofa - a hand-finished, custom-made, two-seater sofa that looks exactly like a stretched racing bucket seat... because that's exactly what it is. It's built by the same people that build the seats for the likes of BTCC superstars,

and if their seats can put up with that sort of abuse then it's probably safe to let the kids climb on it. Built on a substantial, mandrel-bent steel tube frame, it can be made in any colour, trim, design or material combination that you'd care for - your race team's colours, or an exact match for your car's interior, to match your eyes, whatever. Check out www.cobraseats.com.

Plates

New from Tarmac Sportz is a gizmo to keep your car looking clean and tough on the showfield - retractable number plates. Park up, and the plate slides out of sight under the front bumper either manually or, for real flash, by clicking the fancy remote. Stainless

components and fasteners mean it won't pack up in the rain, and all hardware is included for a simple home fit. Nope, I can't imagine any situation in which this could be misused to break the law, so keep it clean on the scene and go to www.tarmacsportz.co.uk.



Sprays

Non-car-people just don't understand. If you say you want something obscure for the garage, they'll just look at you oddly and say, "That's not a proper present; are you sure you wouldn't rather have a nice jumper?" Like this, for instance, a catering-size pack of CarPlan's Workshop Wonders garage consumable aerosols with comedy names. If someone bought me this for Christmas I'd be delighted, yet I can't imagine

anyone ever would. In this pack, there's a can each of penetrating fluid, electrical contact cleaner, battery terminal cleaner and protector, rust dissolver, super-cold releasing spray, belt dressing, gasket remover, tool cleaner, spray glue and silicone lube. And all with comedy names that will keep you chuckling through the long winter nights. The part number is WWPO10, so check out www.carplan.co.uk and find your nearest stockist.



Book

We all love Steve Miles' series of Over Here books, the five-volume series of photos taken by a young Mr Miles of American cars and trucks on the streets of the UK. They're always a fascinating read, and you can still get hold of volumes two to five from his website for just £11.99 apiece. However, there's more to come - a new series of books, similarly packed with shots of

American iron on British streets in the Sixties, but this time each book will focus on cars from one particular manufacturer. And don't think this is just a rehash of the existing books; most of these photos have never before been published! The first titles - Ford, Chevrolet and Plymouth, will be out late this year, priced at just £9.99 including P&P. See www.sgmpublishing.co.uk for details.



Cadillac Capsule

Fashionistas should check out this autumn fashion collaboration between Cadillac and several hot designers. A "specially curated capsule collection" is expressed in 15 looks, chosen and styled by Nick Wooster, with pieces from the likes of Cadet, J. Lindeberg, Marc McNairy and Timo Weiland, and is available exclusively online. "Getting dressed is a form of self-expression, and today, men are more attuned than ever to the possibilities in front of them," Wooster said. "My approach

to curating this collection with Cadillac was to show a spectrum of ideas that can fit into a variety of lifestyles. We've worked with a cross section of some of the most interesting emerging designers to create a collection that is, in my opinion, stylish, appropriate and cool." All of those designers, and none of them seem to know what a pair of socks is for. If you want to look like a complete ponce ... sorry, like one of these male models, go to www.gilt.com/cadillaccapsule.

DVDs

The season may be well and truly over, and when it's dark at 4pm and the winter wind is howling, what could be better than curling up on the sofa with the fire blazing and some Jack Daniels Ovaltine Shooters on the coffee table and being whisked back to the track courtesy of Quarter Mile High Productions? Like their 2015 Hardcore Street title, two hours of record-breaking action from the Topspeed Automotive Street Eliminator, the series for the quickest and fastest street-legal cars in Europe? Low sevens and 200mph+ in the quarter ... Spectacular. Or get nostalgic with Dragstalgia 2015, another two hours of Santa Pod's three-day retro scorcher with classic, wild entertainment on and off track. Or another Santa Pod favourite, the 2015 Mopar EuroNationals, must-see viewing for muscle car fans everywhere as the V8s pounded the quarter, plus visits from Top Sportsman and the wild Pro Mods. Still nostalgic? How about the combined 2-15

NSRA Nostalgia Nationals and Hot Rod Drags title, all the action and fun from these two ever-popular Shakespeare County events condensed onto one disc. Or an hour and a half of 2015 Top Sportsman and Top Dragster, the outlaw contest that pits top competitors from different classes against each other in a dash for the cash, brackets and heads-up. Or the country's favourite doorslammers, the 2015 MSA Pro Modified season, two hours of the wildest rides on the strip from spectacular door cars heading down into the fives over six rounds of racing. And, finally, for those who enjoy the sportsman classes, there's all the action from qualifying and eliminations from Shakey County on the 2015 Springspeed Nationals disc. There is nothing there not to like, so get your winter viewing in order - DVDs are £14.99 each, with P&P at £1.50 per order (not per disc), so head to www.quartermilehigh.com and get sorted!



DeLorean

Released on Back To The Future day, October 21st, this new title is ideal for fans of the cars, fans of the films, or anyone fascinated by the brief and rock-strewn road of the ill-fated DeLorean Motor Company. John Z, The DeLorean And Me is the inside story from Barrie Wills, DMC's longest-serving employee and final chief executive. He

tells the full story, accompanied by hundreds of photographs, many never before published, and isn't afraid to point fingers. We'll have a report in the Reviews pages soon, but if you can't wait, look for the title on amazon.com, or direct from the publishers at www.delorean.com, for £25 in hardback, ISBN 978-0-9856578-8-8.

Machine Mart

Looking to watch Her Majesty's speech and the festive ghastliness of the Christmas EastEnders in peace, without grumbling from your other half? Pick something from here and you won't see him/her from Christmas lunch onwards. Tools are like projects; you can never have too many, only not enough room, so give the gift of tidiness with a tool chest or cabinet from Clarke's HD Plus

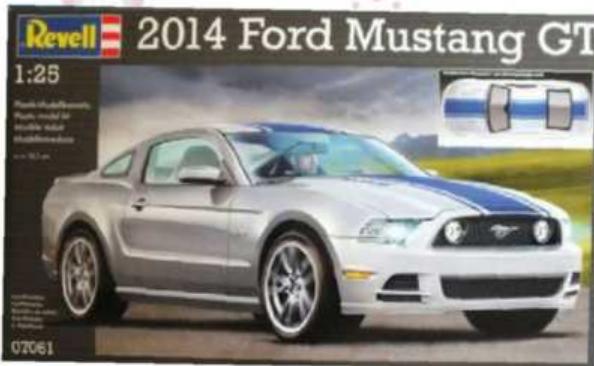
range. They come with ball-bearing drawer runners, anti-slip drawer liners and a push-lock feature so the drawers won't come open if tilted. They even roll on cool chrome wheels with a foot-brake! There's a choice of colours, and a choice of sizes from the easily portable to the XXL 56-inch wide garage cabinets, plus they'd be a cinch to wrap... See www.machinemart.co.uk for details.



Models

Collectible models (or 'toy cars', as they're called by imbeciles who don't understand) are always a good bet, and there are some stunners about from the likes of GreenLight. They have a vast range of models in a bewildering array of sizes, styles and colours, and while they specialise in 'movie' cars, they also produce some cool left-field

stuff like this: a 1965 Ford T5. The T5 was the name given to the Mustang when sold in Germany, as truck manufacturer Krupp owned the rights to the name Mustang. The differences between the Mustang and the T5 were minimal, but now you can own a 1:64-scale model of both! See www.greenlighttoys.com for details and UK stockists.



Sealey

If you're stuck for ideas, grab a Sealey catalogue and you won't be able to find a page that doesn't contain something you can't live without in your garage. In fact, you may as well just send the catalogue to Santa with a note saying, "One of each, please." Sealey's Christmas promotion features

a raft of gift ideas including toolboxes, tool combos, LED inspection lamps, hand and power tools, and garage and workshop equipment, and all at discounted prices until December 31st! Find them at www.sealey.co.uk or call 01284 757500 for a catalogue or promotional leaflet.



Subscription

Well, we hope we've given you a few ideas about how to bring a smile to even the most Scrooge-like fizzog this Christmas. Don't forget you'll find even more great ideas on our Reviews and Tried'n'Tested pages. But why stop at Christmas? How about the best gift of all, one that keeps giving all year long? This, of course, is a subscription to American Car Magazine. All the best feature cars, show and event reports, trackside

racing reports, news, views and ways of getting your hands dirty. In fact, anything to do with owning, fixing and driving American cars and trucks here in the UK. You'll save a few quid a month, save 12 trips to the shop, and even get the mag a couple of days before it goes on general sale. Now THAT's enough to make any pterolhead's Christmas merry. See the subscription offer on page 67 for details.

Kit

When it's too salty to take your baby out, and too cold to work outside, why not build a car inside? New from Revell is this 1:25-scale 2014 Ford Mustang GT, the last of the S195 models. Let any American car fan unwrap this on Christmas morning and you really can't

go wrong, plus it's a 'skill level 3', which means it's suitable for beginners and patient kids (although experienced modellers will have it done before Christmas lunch). Revell model kits are available from all good toy and model stores. For details visit www.revell.de/en.



Auto Finish

When any non-car-person has to buy a present for a car-person, they almost always default to car care products. Make sure you dodge the crap this year; why not suggest something like this little valet case by Auto Finish, from CarPlan? It contains just about

every cleaning and protection product you could need to keep your car looking its best, and all in a boot-friendly zip-up case. You can find details on www.auto-finish.com and they'll be on sale in loads of good hardware and accessory shops.



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Hire Purpose

A late-model Camaro doesn't have to be a long-term relationship...
though you will end up wishing it was.

Words: Dave Smith Photography: Dave Smith, Darren Rapley



Hire cars. They're not interesting. In fact, blandness is one of the common factors among hire cars. A fleet of mid-range, anonymous sedans in unspectacular colours and trim. It doesn't have to be this way. Over the past few years there have been several companies around the UK that rent out classic cars for self-drive hire. More recently, some of the more adventurous have added some American cars to the fleet; usually an early Mustang or two, or perhaps a C3 Corvette, but nothing late-model or lairy.

Now there's American Car Hire Ltd.

From that name, you may be able to guess what they do. Based near Rayleigh, in Essex, these guys have four late-model Camaros on their fleet, and all four are available for self-drive hire. They invited us along to sample the merchandise, and who are we to argue?

So, before dawn one day in early November, Lyndsey and myself set out for darkest Essex. It was foggy and damp, but this soon gave way to a grim, grey, misty, drizzly arsehole of a day completely unsuited for anything other than staring at through a pub window. Hardly the sort of day to

get adventurous with muscle cars. However, Paul and Darren made us very welcome, and showed us around the fleet.

Their range starts with a Camaro LS, handsome in dark blue with white stripes, and a crisp V6 with auto transmission. It's a cruiser, ideal for someone looking to test their aptitude for left-hand drive or cruise under the radar. Next is another LS, but this one is dressed up as Bumblebee from the Transformers movies. It's another V6 auto, but has a rorty Flowmaster exhaust, Lambo-style doors and Transformers badging. There's no flying under the radar in this, but it is unsurprisingly booked solid around Prom season. Next is the latest addition, an Inferno Orange SS, largely stock with V8, six-speed manual and plenty of presence. This is the one to have if you're thinking of buying one and want an extended test drive, the full Camaro experience. Then there's the bad-ass, a ZL1-based machine modified by SLP, number 147 of only 250 produced, with blown V8, six-speed, lowered and uprated suspension and all the toys. This is the one that has been used as the course Safety Car at Brands Hatch for Speedfest, and is the one to have if you really want to frighten yourself.

The company started early in 2015. Boss Darren had brought a couple of Camaros over to sell, and had the self-drive hire idea purely because nobody else does it! The company insurer hunted high and low to find





A Dream Come True

ACM team member **Lyndsey Godfrey** gets her first taste of American muscle from the driver's seat.

After a three-hour drive down to Essex in the pouring rain and fog-soaked motorways, I'm afraid my excitement had dulled with the weather. Then I pulled into Hire a Camaro's premises and there, sitting outside ready and waiting for us, were four of the most amazing machines I have laid my eyes on for quite some time. Standing out from the rest was my personal favourite. What film-obsessed car fanatic would not dream about driving Bumblebee from the Transformers franchise? After having a chat with Darren, the owner, and Paul who looks after the everyday hiring of these bad boys, I was finally handed the keys to the yellow-and-black mean machine.

With a 3.6-litre V6, 336bhp, left-hand rear-wheel drive, automatic, with full black leather interior and scissor doors, I turned the key and it roared into life, along with a CD playing the Transformers

theme tune. I was in heaven! The handling was amazing and being as I drive a manual, not having to worry about changing gears was great. I could just sit back, enjoy the ride and put my foot down! Well only so far, as the number of speed cameras around Essex is phenomenal. At one point waiting at a roundabout, a car passed with a child of about six years old in the passenger seat, his face went up the window and I could see him pointing and yelling happily to his mother. I think I made his day - he had seen Bumblebee!

All too soon it was time to return our first two cars in exchange for the V8s. To be fair, I was having so much fun driving Bumblebee, that I did not really want to change, but change we did and boy, oh boy, I was glad I got to experience the Orange Inferno. WOW, is all I can really say. On turning the key the car came alive, the power that emanated from this machine

made the whole car shudder at just a slight touch of the throttle, I knew this was going to be fun! This was a 6.2-litre V8 with 425bhp, manual transmission and left-hand drive. We decided to take these beasts to Southend, and who wouldn't enjoy the feel of these unrestricted machines beneath you, with their unbeatable style and the all-red leather interior.

Everywhere we drove, people stopped, stared and took photos. The drive was amazing, gears just slipped up and down with ease and the ride itself was so comfortable that you forgot about everything else and just enjoyed the ride. Girls (and boys), if you want to feel the experience of driving a real car and not just watch them on TV, believe me this is the place to go. Unlimited mileage, and the only self-drive Camaro experience in the UK - the perfect present!

an underwriter, and eventually found someone though it was definitely not cheap. Hirers have taken the cars all over the UK, including up to Leeds and Birmingham for weddings, and another chap rented the SS for a week just to see how he and his other half got on with it before they went out and bought one for themselves. Another couple from way up north took the train to Essex, picked the Camaro up, then spent the weekend in London touring the sights and taking the train home again; they made a big weekend of it. So far the company has had plenty of responsible drivers and only one bad one. I bet most mainstream car hire businesses wish they could claim the same.

First off, we took out the V6s. These are excellent daily-drivable cruisers, and you can get comfortable in them within minutes. I drove the dark blue one, which is as stealthy as a Camaro gets in the UK, and lets you work out some of the handful of cons you'll find with one, such as the massive blind spot over your right shoulder. After this, you can start to enjoy the sprightly performance. Not so much in the Bumblebee, which has a magnetic attraction to camera-phones!

After that, we took out the V8s. Now these are proper Camaros, not limited or idiot-proofed, and the blown one has about 575bhp at its disposal, so getting behind the wheel on a cool, damp day in speed-camera-infested Essex is a test of your resolve and strength of character. Loss of traction action is just the slightest tickle of the throttle away, and as the car is still stickered up for Pace Car duty, 'inconspicuous' is not in its lexicon, so you could end up meeting many respectable members of the community if you're not careful - policemen, magistrates, doctors, surgeons, etc. If you think



you can handle proper, lairy, rear-drive American muscle, then this is the place to see if you're right.

Despite the forest of speed cameras and some truly patience-testing traffic, this brutal machine is a pussycat, keeping cool and not requiring the left leg of a weightlifter to control the clutch, but when the road does open up ... woah. Wheelspin in first is to be expected, but it was followed by more wheelspin in second, third, and I bottled it in fourth. As much as my heart wanted to keep the tyres smoking, my brain and my sphincter ganged up on it, which at least made sure that the car was returned in the same shape as it was taken. Or, in fact, returned at all. I could quite happily have kept that supercharged sweetheart forever.

This lucky young guy got a birthday Transformers treat! Happy belated birthday, Riley, from ACM and Hire A Camaro

The Camaros are hired out for periods starting at 24 hours and going up to a week at a time. Are you thinking of buying one? Take an extended test drive. Are you looking for a Christmas present for the muscle car fan who has everything? Gift vouchers are available; what could be better? Need a special car for a special occasion? You can rent one of these Camaros for a very reasonable price, probably cheaper than you could book a limo. It's definitely worth looking into, because there's nothing here not to like.

Find American Car Hire Ltd on www.hireacamaro.co.uk, call them on 01268 575 575, or find their busy page on Facebook. Better yet, check out our competition in association with American Car Hire Ltd on page 18 and it could be you behind the wheel! **ACM**





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The Late Show

It's Octoberfest for petrol-heads - the American-themed Autumn Classic at Prescott's famous hill

Words & photography: Andy Davis

When: October 3rd & 4th, 2015 What: Prescott Autumn Classic

Where: Prescott Hill, Gotherington, Gloucestershire

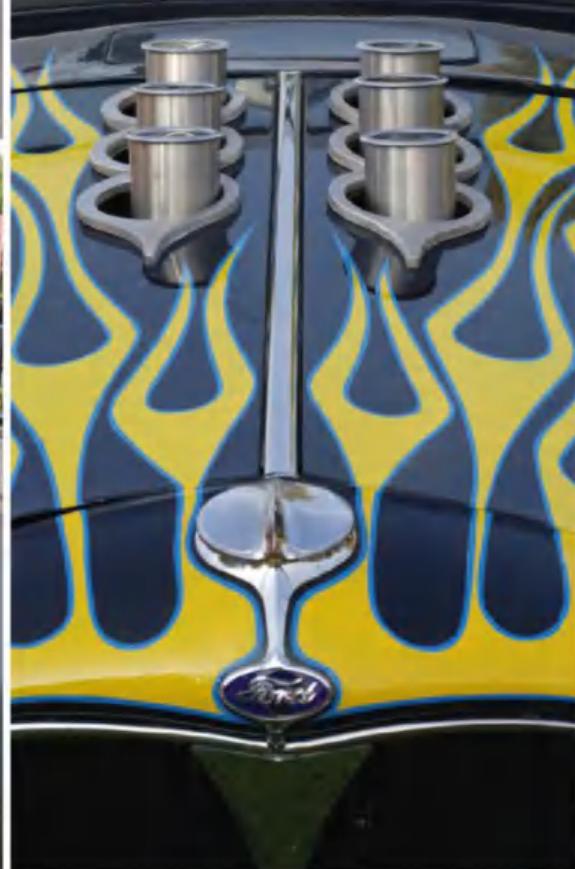
God must drive a Bugatti. How else can the owners club be so lucky with the weather in October? Whilst Saturday was cloudy but dry, once again Sunday offered warm sun and blue skies over Prescott. And, as usual, the final hill climb of the year had a very American feel, promising "Spills, Chills and Hot Rod Thrills".

There was a great atmosphere in the pits, with a large section reserved for traditional hot rods and big turn-outs of Indian motorcycles and classic Yanks, along with the Wall of Death (once more providing free shows) and a live stage featuring rockabilly band The Bravo Boys. For the kids there was radio control truck racing,

a mini biplane from the nearby Jet Age Museum, juggling stilt walkers and a face painter in a tepee. Featured American race cars included two Sixties Chaparral V8 sports racers, one of which had a rare two-speed GM transaxle gear box, and Chevy powered McLaren single seaters.

Over on the other side of the track in the Orchard field, reserved parking for American cars and invited car clubs made up a mini-show field, and the Bugatti Trust Museum was open with free admission. This small but fascinating museum features a three-car display (vehicles are lent by owners on a rotation basis), a "body-off" driving chassis, display →







engines, models and a wealth of photographs, original drawings and archives. It even has furniture made by Ettore Bugatti's father. Did you know that Bugatti built trains? And an aeroplane? They even cast their own workbench vices complete with the famous logo.

On the hill itself, a wide range of cars were competing in their final rounds, including Porsches, classic Aston Martins, Austin Healeys and, of course, vintage Bugattis. With classes for pre-'75 saloons and sports cars there was plenty of classic car action (although there was a lack of American muscle this year) and on Sunday the class for "People with Flat Heads" saw early Ford V8 powered specials competing with Allards and the odd Model T or A. The lunch break on both days featured an on-track American car cavalcade, ending with big rolling burnouts from Dodge

Viper and Le Mans Cobra race cars. A growing element is the inclusion of Stanley steam-powered cars, with half a dozen taking part this year. Sunday also featured a terrific stunt plane display.

Building on the low-key success of last year's ACM-supported American Show'n'Shine, event sponsors Porsche Centre Tewkesbury stepped in, and with serious prize money on offer, some top-quality show cars turned out, particularly on Sunday with about 40 high standard entries. Top honours went to a lime green 1970 Challenger, with last year's winning 1941 Cadillac taking the runner-up spot. Incidentally, the period perfect Caddy was up for sale at a cool £65K!

If the weather's good, Sunday in particular at the Autumn Classic is a cracking final day out of the season. The full car parks sure pay testament to that! **ACM**

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Wight Supremacy

The huge Isle of Wight Classic show invited the Americans along, and boy did they put on a show

Words & photography: Grant Ford

September sun greeted the 700 cars that boarded the Wightlink ferry en route to Victor Gallucci's weekend of all things classic across the Solent. "How many does it hold?" I asked the fluorescent-jacketed dock side worker. "Normally 106; today a lot less if they are all the size of that Cadillac."

The two-day event takes in Newport town on the Saturday and the vast space of Ryde seafront on the Sunday. An idea to situate the Stateside machines in their own distinct acreage of show-and-shine area alongside the marina proved a great success and certainly popular

with thousands of visitors on the day. Paul and Mark Watts were able to drown out the hovercraft leaving the quayside when their dragster 'Agamemnon' burst into life. Built on the Island by Advanced Automotive, its nine-litre Chevy unit offers 1,500bhp on regular unleaded and had all within 200 yards covering their ears as the ground shook.

Charlie Virash didn't have to travel far with his 1958 Chevy Biscayne sedan delivery van, another Island machine that originated from San Jose, a rare sight in the UK and fitted with the later 327 motor. Travelling →





(Above) Ryde seafront show enjoyed a great backdrop, enthusiastic crowds and a great atmosphere.

(Left) Charlie with his Biscayne from San Jose, believed to be the only genuine example in the UK. (Far left) Barry Craven – above – displayed the superb GT Mustang that looks factory fresh. Under the hood is an original 351, and the attention to detail is impressive.

(Right) Victor attempts to 'outnoise' the V8 Chevy 8/71 blower with 1340 Dominator, no chance.



down from Milton Keynes, the superb Mustang GT of Barry Craven: a five-year nut and bolt restoration named 'Project Ruby'. One of the last factory-produced GTs, Barry chose the totally stock route and succeeded in returning this North Carolina car to what many believed to be better than showroom finish.

The variety and quality of the display ensured lots of interest throughout the day and one machine that caught the eye was Lee Chillingworth's Ford Custom 300; an ex-Texas car that made the journey from Croydon. The oldest machines included a Ford Model A Tudor with marques from every decade

afterwards up to and including some of the latest from across the Atlantic. The Mayor of Ryde, Roi Milburn, confessed he was seriously impressed with the display and would look to the council to offer support for 2016. Plans for next year are already under way and the idea of a Saturday evening classic cruise on the Island is being considered. One thing's for certain, the organiser Mr Gallucci is going to have to find extra space. With many participants having already confirmed their return in 12 months, after this year's triumph the Isle of Wight could be facing the invasion of the big block. Don't miss out next year - contact vicgallucci@gmail.com. **ACM**



STOP PRESS: The 2016 event - the event's 50th year - will be held over September 17th to 18th

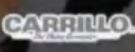
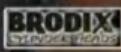
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The Slippery Slope

Late August saw the Retro Riders hitting the hillside for their annual Gathering

Words & photography: Dave Smith

The Retro Rides Gathering is not the place for automotive snobbery. The demographic of the participants is a bit younger than most general classic or American shows, and likewise so are the cars - they're mostly 1990 or older, and mostly old enough to be interesting if not old enough to be "classics". It's all about what you can do with your imagination and graft rather than your wallet. And one thing I didn't see many of was trailers...

It's held at Shelsley Walsh hillclimb, and while there were a few guest demonstrations from pure race machinery, there was ample

opportunity for non-timed runs up the hill on a run-what-you-brung basis. Brilliant. The only issue that threw a spanner in those works was the weather. It piddled down almost all day, a standout feature of much of August 2015. This did mean that both the RWYBers and guest demonstrators were taking it a bit easy, although Wacky Mick did manage to put Bluebell the Bedford backwards through the fence and down into an extremely muddy field. Thankfully no one was hurt and little damage was caused.

American machinery could be found dotted about the place, from

a red Firebird to a rather lovely early Sixties Mercury and a handful of Fifties pick-ups and vans. One blown Fox Mustang was whistling up the hill all afternoon, followed by a Ford F-250 powered by an Iveco diesel!

If you fancy a change from the drag strip, or a change from the static car show formula, this is definitely an event to watch out for, especially as there aren't that many other events in the West. The 2016 Gathering will be on Sunday, August 28th, which is on bank holiday weekend. See www.retroridesgathering.com for details. **ACM**







1964 Ford Galaxie Country Sedan, Runs & Drives project £7,450 as is



1949 Dodge Business Coupe, previously restored, £8,750 with UK registration



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1959 Ford Country Sedan Station Wagon project, runs & drives £7,450



1947 Ford Sedan, suicide doors, new glass and rubbers, rock solid, £7,600 with UK registration



1951 Chevy Coupe, V8, Auto, project £6,950

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Tricks and Treats

Shakespeare County's end-of-season blast is part RWYB, part party, all fun

Words: Dave Smith Photography: Jeni Long, Dennis Wood

Shakey County's Halloween Bonfire Burn-up is a superb way to celebrate the end of yet another season of fantastic racing at the Warwickshire strip. An open weekend of Run What You Brung, with a spot of Outlaw Street and Bracket Gamblers thrown

in for good measure, there are always plenty of people looking for that last test run or new personal best before winter sets in.

Saturday was a bit of a dead loss, with plenty of precipitation to spoil the fun, but it's dry in Kenny's Bar so →







the annual Halloween fancy dress party was in full swing. There were some truly frightful sights to behold; even more than you can usually find in Kenny's. Trackside there were flaming burnouts and fully-dressed big rigs on parade to keep the chills away.

Sunday was a great deal more conducive to racing, and the Halloween Gambler was won by American Super Stock champion Lee 'Cookie' Chiles in his fresh-in Plymouth Valiant, shaking down in the 10s already. The weather may not always have been kind this year, but it's been yet another great year at Shakey - many laughs, a few tears, a bit of mud and a long, long wait until the gates open again for the 2016 season. See www.shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk for details of the 2016 calendar, and we'll see you there. **ACM**



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Flaming Finale

Santa Pod ended their season with the usual flaming extravaganza at Flame And Thunder

Words & photography: John Kennedy



It was October 31st, and the last blast on Santa Pod's quarter mile for yet another year. Blimey! Where did 2015 go? It seems like only yesterday I was getting all my gear ready for the Festival of Power.

Santa Pod's showcase event of the year was, as usual, brilliant - this year, like last, we were very lucky with some absolutely gorgeous weather,

visitors young and old were treated to an amazing fun-filled day. There was everything there you could think of - live music, a wall of death, fairground rides, helicopter trips, drift cars, transformers, monster trucks, stunt bikes, BMX riders, static car and truck show, the pyrotechnic wizardry of the Twister air display team, Team Maximum lock, live wrestling... the list

goes on. It's safe to say it was a full-on family extravaganza.

The strip was looking good and surprisingly dry, down to the usual hard work of the track crew I suspect as the previous evening had been damp and chilly. Every kind of vehicle seemed to be there from many fine American muscle cars (one that stuck in my mind was a lovely Chevy Camaro recently →





Tim Stanbury in the fresh-in Camaro (top), which we'll hopefully have more about very soon. This crew-cab monster (above) is an ex-feature truck and the latest addition to the ranks of Topspeed Street Eliminator. Once the sun goes down, the light show begins, adding a surreal atmosphere to the startline (centre right) while Twister gets disco-tastic (above centre). "I am the god of hellfire, and I bring you... Bob Hawkins (right)."



imported by owner Tim Stanbury) through to the bonkers jet-powered granny carts, the equally bonkers monster beach buggies, the V8 Syko trike, and the seriously fast jet bike of Eric Teboul, running jaw-dropping five-second passes. How he can hold on to that bike is beyond me.

The demo runs... yeah right! Putting two vehicles side by side on a drag strip and then telling the drivers not to race is like telling Usain Bolt he's got to walk 100 metres. It was fast and furious, the passes resulting in many personal bests and a few surprises, too. One very unfortunate incident involved a VW van which landed very heavily after a spectacular wheel stand, resulting in the driver suffering a serious back injury. The action continued after the track had been cleared of rescue and ambulance crews, and shortly afterwards Liam Jones stunned the crowds when he blasted off the line in his RF Motorsport Top Fuel Dragster, and proper ground-shaking runs they were - too.

The regular blistering runs by Martin Hill and Julian Webb in the

Jet cars kept the excitement going, while over the bank the funfair was in full swing, and the Live Action Arena hosted some fantastic driving and stunt skills on two and four wheels. As the day progressed and darkness crept in, the massive bonfire was lit and the scene was set for the evening's track entertainment. The light show, smokey burnouts and continuing demo runs added to the Halloween atmosphere. It was then time for FireForce 3's final run, which signalled the start of the well-orchestrated firework display which was very impressive. The crowds hadn't seen Bob Hawkins get into position for his usual fire burnout, a buzz amongst the uninitiated visitors started once the fuel on track was ignited and as Bob spun those rear tyres through it this was met by a few expletives and "he must be mad" comments.

There were a few more burnouts and runs, and that was that for yet another year. If you've never experienced the thrill of a drag strip be sure to visit Santa Pod Raceway next season as 2016 is their 50th year. **ACM**



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Outlaw Street

2015 Race Series: Round OS-6



Words: Mark Wallington



When: August 21st to 23rd Where: Santa Pod Raceway, VW Action

VW Action was, as ever, a great blast; it's a 'must-do' event for Outlaw Street members for all manner of reasons, one key one being the laid-back, friendly atmosphere that is VW Action. The now traditional impromptu heads-up racing between our collection of V8 muscle cars and English tin versus the ever-quicker collection of VW Beetles, campers and the like is always a great crowd pleaser with no end of pit lane banter flying around.

The sun gods decided at long last to shine on us for the best part of the weekend with Saturday being a scorcher, a few daring to complain that it was a tad too hot, which after the floods of OS-4 at the Mopars were brave words indeed. Massive thanks to Brian and his team for a great VW Action weekend, which included a bit of night racing on the Saturday and a Who tribute band thanks to this year's Mods & Rockers theme.

The racing amongst the Outlaw Street members was a tad fierce over the weekend with many having the 'light bulb' realisation that there were only three rounds left of the 2015 season and if they wanted to be a contender for this season's top three they'd have to pull their socks up and put their foot down! The 'putting your foot down' part caused several early exits with OS-9 Rob Leyman in his turbo'd Monaro, OS-19 David Mahoney in his LS1 Corvette, OS-43 Linden Shepperson in his MkII Escort and OS-31 Nick Rose in his late model Mustang all heading for the trailers early. However, several other racers were having good weekends, including OS-10 Troy Attree in his LS1 Camaro who was out chasing PBs in both ET and RT, and OS-50 Roy Collins in his supercharged big-block Camaro from which he squeezed a 9.1898 at 145.34mph, with still more to come. The Joe & Co sponsored Reaction Time trophies and prize money were being fought over again with a few red lights appearing on the startline as members got that little bit too keen to beat the tree.

The top six RTs of OS-6 were:

1	OS-10	Troy Attree in his LS1 Camaro	0.1293 RT
2	OS-31	Nick Rose, supercharged Mustang	0.1334
3	OS-50	Roy Collins, big-block Camaro	0.1710
4	OS-68	Debbie Taylor, late model Mustang	0.2312
5	OS-69	Gary Semper, '69 Firebird	0.2426
6	OS-56	Doug Harwood, supercharged Barracuda	0.2985

At every points round of the series, the highest scoring points winner of the round wins a prize. This round it was OS-45 Kevin Shepperson.

The top points scorers of OS6 were:

1	OS-45	Kevin Shepperson	221 points
2	OS-50	Roy Collins	220
3	OS-31	Nick Rose	219
4=	OS-10	Troy Attree	218
4=	OS-23	Simon Paul	218
6	OS-44	Linden Shepperson	214

The WASP Improvement Award is awarded at every points round to the member with the biggest ET improvement from the last round. The award is a £25 WASP parts voucher to help buy parts to go even faster! There's a pattern starting to form with the OS-4 winner also securing the OS-5 win, looks like other members better start upping their game. The OS-6 WASP Improvement Award went to OS-10 Troy Attree, with an improvement of -0.2060 of a second. If you'd like more information about the series you can find it at www.outlawstreet.co.uk.

When? What? Where?

Organisers!

Please send any 2016 event details to us at:
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 Likewise your cruise meets for the Monthly Meetings section.

December

December 26th - Romsey Boxing Day Pre-76 Car & Bike Meet, Romsey, Hants, romseyclassiccarandbikemeet.co.uk

December 28th - ICENI Brass Monkey Run, departs The Ram, Brandon 10am, arrive Wells-next-the-Sea noon, tel Tony 01842 810720, Carl 01842 815637, icenicarclub@fsmail.net

2016

January 14th-17th - Autosport International, NEC, Birmingham, autosportinternational.com

February 18th-21st - London Classic Car Show, ExCel, London, thelondonclassiccarshow.co.uk

February 26th-28th - Race Retro Historic Motorsport Show, Stoneleigh Park, near Coventry CV8 2LZ, raceretro.com

April 2nd-3rd - Public Track Weekend, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

April 16th-17th - Spring Madness RWYB, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

April 30th-May 1st - Atomic Festival, Sywell Aerodrome, Northants, atomicfestival.co.uk

April 30th-May 2nd - APIRA 9th Springspeed Nationals, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

May 8th - Test'n'Tune, North Weald, Essex, maitlandracing.com

May 14th-15th - Late Spring Madness RWYB, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

May 28th-30th - Yanks Weekend & NASC Gary's Picnic, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

June 5th - Test'n'Tune, North Weald, Essex, maitlandracing.com

June 9th-12th - Hot Rods & Hills, Pooley Bridge, Cumbria, search Facebook Hotrods And Hills

June 11th-12th - RWYB inc Bracket Gamblers, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

June 24th-26th - NSRA Nostalgia Nationals, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, nsra.org.uk

July 1st-3rd - Can-Am Independence Day Weekend, Cofton Country Holidays, nr Dawlish, Devon, canamcarclub.org.uk

July 2nd-3rd - Cars & Stripes, Rockingham, Northants, cars-and-stripes.co.uk

July 7th-11th - Americana International, Loughborough, americana-international.co.uk

July 10th - Test'n'Tune, North Weald, Essex, maitlandracing.com

July 15th-17th - Phantoms Hot Rod Hootenanny, Stirling Rugby Club, FK9 5AP, 07789 280600, phantomsc@outlook.com

July 22nd-24th - Silverstone Classic, Silverstone, Northants, silverstoneclassic.com

July 23rd-24th - Midsummer Madness RWYB, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

July 29th-31st - Mopar Euronationals, Santa Pod, Northants, 01234 782828, santapod.com

July 31st - Test'n'Tune, North Weald, Essex, maitlandracing.com

August 11th-14th - Bulldog Bash, Shakespeare County Raceway, Stratford-upon-Avon, shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

shakespearecountyraceway.co.uk

August 21st - Test'n'Tune, North Weald, Essex, maitlandracing.com

When: December 2015
What: A handful of events
Where: South and East



December is apt to be a quiet month, but if you're heartily sick of Christmas cheer, there are a few opportunities for escape. Romsey's Boxing Day meet is getting to be a monster, taking over the town centre, but it's always fun and raises a packet for charity. Be early, though, as it fills up quickly and note that it's for pre-86 Yanks and pre-76 everything else only - see the website. On bank holiday Monday, forget the sales and take a nice run out to the seaside with the ICENI crew's Brass Monkey cruise. Prove that US classics aren't just fair weather machines! As you can see, the 2016 calendar is filling up nicely, so get your dates pencilled in, get your rear in gear, and get ready for another stellar season in 2016. Happy Christmas!

Monthly Meets

Every Tuesday - Petrolhead meet @ Witham and Blues, Boston, Lincs, PE22 7AJ, withamandblues.com

Every Sunday - National Can Am car club, 2pm, The Viewpoint, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset, canamcarclub.org.uk

1st Tuesday - Black Country Cruisers, 7.30pm, The Greyhound Inn, Swindon near Wombridge, 01384 287243, blackcountrycruisers.co.uk

1st Wednesday - Hot Rod Night, 6pm on, Ace Café NW10, 0208 961 1000, ace-cafe-london.com

1st Wednesday & 3rd Wednesday - American Auto Mags Cruise, The Hollow Tree, off A49 Stretton WA4 4LX, 01606 888324, americanautomags.com, during British Summer Time ONLY!

1st and 3rd Wednesday - The Victory Wheelers meet, The Plough, Portsmouth Road, Burlesdon, Southampton SO31 8BT

1st Sunday - V8 Mentalists Breakfast Meet, The Coach House, Chelsham Common, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9PB, 07950 258704

1st Sunday - AACNW Big Meet, 10am on, Krispy Kreme Trafford Park, behind Trafford Centre, 0161 865 7684/01744 609404

1st Sunday - Goodwood Breakfast Meet, Goodwood, W Sussex (NOT July or September) goodwood.com/breakfastclub

1st Sunday - Boneshakers SE, The Barley Mow, Selmesdon, E. Sussex BN26 6UF, 07541 524430 or 07738 374905

1st Sunday - MOCGB South Coast Muzzers, Cams Mill, Fareham, Hants PO16 8AA, 10.30am on, tel Keith 07785 577552, Keith@its-ltd.net

2nd Wednesday - UK Street Machines, The George Inn, Main Rd, Wilby,

Wellingborough NN8 2UB, ukstreetmachines.com

2nd Saturday - Big Moe's Diner, A13 Newham, London IG11 0AD, bigmoesdiner.co.uk

3rd Monday - National Can Am Club, 7.30pm, Old Thatch, Wimborne Rd West, Ferndown, Dorset BH21 7NW, canamcarclub.org.uk

3rd Wednesday - The Bowling Green, Lichfield, Staffs, 7pm on

3rd Wednesday - The Head Gas Gits, North Star pub, Iver, Bucks SLO 9AL, facebook.com/groups/headgasgits

3rd Friday - The Pebble Dash, Roedean Cafe, Marine Drive, Brighton BN2 5RL, 7.30pm on, see Facebook

3rd Sunday - Burnout Auto Club, meet 3pm, Wrey Arms, Sticklepath, Barnstaple, Devon, 07973 47125 or see Facebook

3rd Sunday - Fairmile Pub, Portsmouth Road, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1BW, 07802 166957

3rd Sunday - American Auto Mags Lunch Cruise, The Hollow Tree, Cheshire WA4 4LX, 11am on, winter months ONLY! 01606 888324

Last Wednesday - Woody's Hot Rod & Classic Meet, Woodland Waters, Grantham, Lincs NG32 3RT, Facebook "Hot Rod night at Woody's Bar"

Last Friday - National Can Am car club, 7pm, McDonalds, Wessex Gate Retail Park, Creekmoor, Poole, canamcarclub.org.uk

Last Saturday - All American Cruise-In, 4pm on, Ace Café NW10, 0208 9611000, ace-cafe-london.com

Last Saturday - Chelsea Cruise, Chelsea Bridge SW8 4NG from 8pm, Derek 0208 765 1381

Last Saturday - Knights CC cruise, St James Retail Park, Knaresborough, N Yorks HG5 8PZ, March - September

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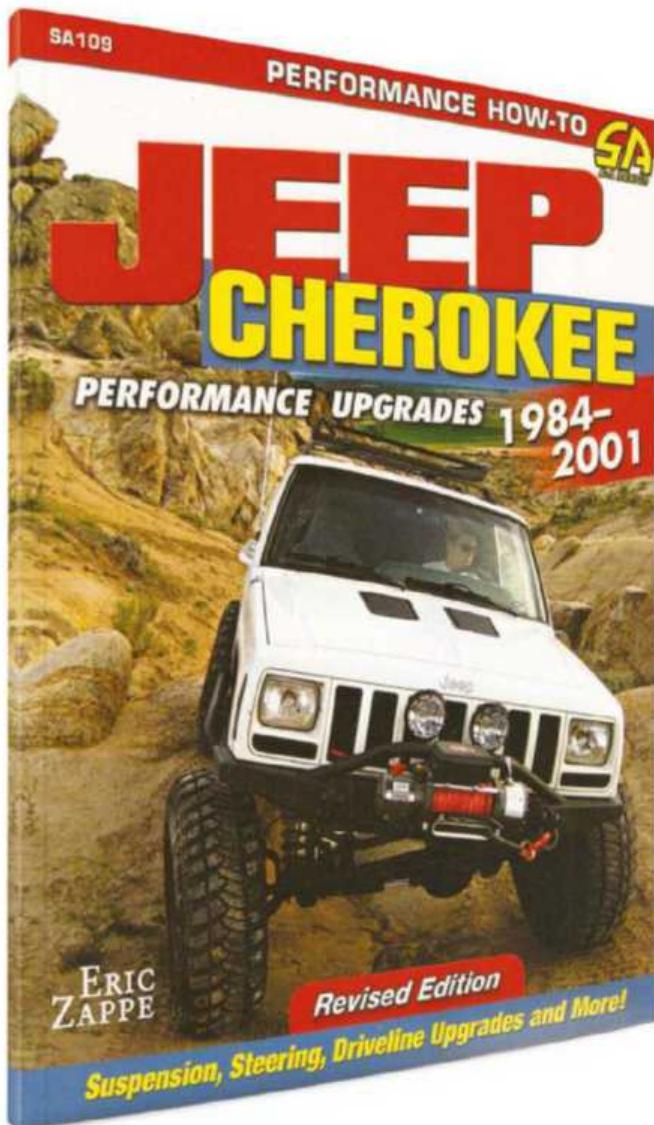


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BookReviews



Jeep Cherokee Performance Upgrades

Author: Eric Zappe **Published by:** CarTech **Price:** £21.99

Here's a title for anyone looking to make the most of what has to be the American 4x4 budget buy of the moment, Jeep's XJ Cherokee. There are still plenty of these square Discovery-bashers about, and at bargain money.

First off, this isn't a brand-new book; it's a revision of an existing title. Second, this, as you might expect, concentrates on the XJ's performance off-road - while there's a wee bit about how to tweak up the old 4.0 straight-six, this isn't for anyone looking to get into the 10s on the strip. This tells you what you need to know to get the best out of a stock Jeep, including a few tips, tweaks and common issues to look out for, then goes on in stages about how to lift, toughen and modify

for everything from light green-laning to crawling the Rubicon. The author doesn't assume you have money to spend, and looks at the pros and cons of various aftermarket parts and their actual worth along with step-by-step fitting. Everything is clearly photographed, and there are short in-depth features on a few modified XJs to give you some ideas along the way.

Here in the UK, the home of Land Rover, the good old Jeep may not be the first port of call for anyone of a mud-plugging bent, but they could well be missing a trick when you can pick up an XJ for a couple of hundred quid and, with the help of this book and some scrapyard know-how, build a serious off-roader.

I Need A Dodge!

Produced/Directed by: Nick Hall **Published by:** Tindog Films

Price: £14.99 (Collector's Edition with extras £19.99)

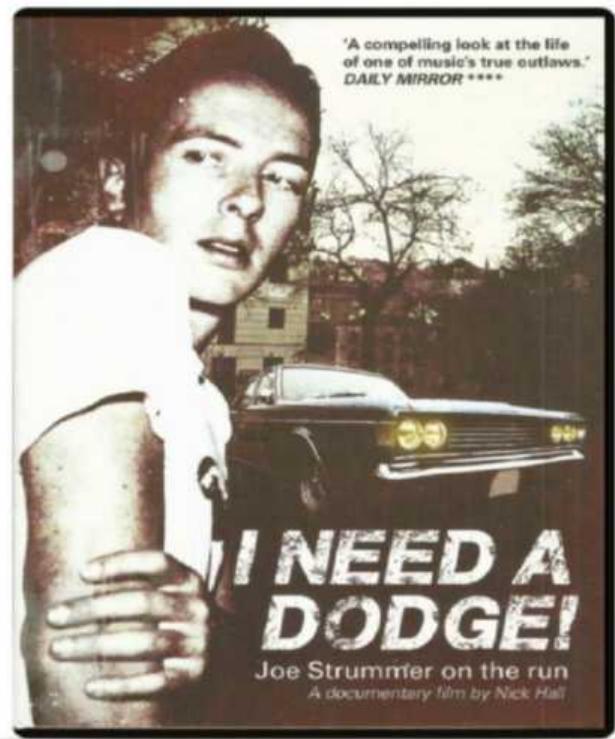
Available from: In stores or online

Back in the mid-Eighties, with the glory days of punk long gone and The Clash imploding, Joe Strummer had a bit of a meltdown and buggered off to Spain. In 1985 he wound up in Granada, in southern Spain, where he wanted to lick his wounds, but after a while became involved with some local punk rock bands. During this period, he saw a Dodge and decided he wanted one.

The car he saw was a Dodge 3700 GT, based on the Dodge Dart, and built from a CKD kit from Argentina by Spanish company Barreiros Chrysler. They were all straight six powered, but production ended in 1977 when Chrysler pulled out of Europe amid the whole Chrysler-Rootes Group-Dodge-Renault-Talbot debacle. Anyway, in 1985, Strummer found one for sale, borrowed some money and bought the car. He then drove around Spain, loving every minute of it, until January 1986 when the girlfriend he left behind in London phoned and told him she was about to give birth to their daughter. He drove straight to Madrid, parked the Dodge and got on a plane. The problem was, he forgot where he parked it...

In 1997, during an interview on Spanish radio from backstage at Glastonbury, Strummer appealed to listeners in Madrid to help him find the car he lost 12 years previously. Five years later, he died; the car is still unaccounted for. Filmmaker Nick Hall sets out to find it, but as there's no paper trail (Strummer never 'owned' the car in Spain, nor actually had a driving licence), it's not going to be easy.

This is a fascinating tale about Strummer, one of music's outlaws, and his escape after fame pulled the rug from under The Clash. Mostly told in interviews with bandmates from the abortive Clash revival and those Spanish band members he helped and produced for, it paints a picture of a lost man. Don't expect this to be a film about tracking down lost cars, or even expect to learn too much about Spanish-built Dodges - searching for the car is almost incidental to the plot - but as a look into what happened to the frontman of one of the UK's most original, pioneering bands after it all came crashing down, this is an hour or so very well spent.



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blueprints

1958-1961 Chevrolet full-size

The '58 Chevy had a hard job to do: it had to follow the '57 Chevy.

At the time it probably didn't seem that hard, and Chevrolet followed the pattern of the time - bigger, wider, more chrome, bigger engine. This worked, to an extent, and more than a million base Delrays and Yeomans, mid-range Biscaynes and Brookwoods, top-line Bel Airs and special Impalas and Normads were built and sold. It's the years since that have been less kind.

For decades, the '55 to '57 Chevys have been the golden child of the American classic and street rod world. Their perfect storm of styling and performance has led them to become THE Fifties classic, and ever since, the Chevys that came before and after have been in the Tri-Chevy's shadow. Now, with the Tri-Chevy still reigning supreme, enthusiasts have started looking towards the later models ... and so are we. We're looking at Chevys post-'57 and pre-lowrider!

After the success of the '58, the '59 was another groundbreaker. Even longer and wider, the new range - minus the Delray but with the Impala as a top-end sporting line of its own - rode on a brand-new chassis with an X-shaped backbone, and the massive tailfins were laid almost horizontal over tear-drop taillights. As the '58 has found its own loyal following, so too has the 'gullwing' '59.

Then came the '60. It had lost its 'eyebrows' over the headlamps, and the rear gullwings were squarer and sat above double or triple round taillights. This styling wasn't quite as fluid as that of the '59, and has yet to really find broad appeal as a classic. The '61 range was different again, with all-new bodywork that included a hint of a return to the '59 'eyebrow' and a shrunken gullwing effect on the boot that met in a V in the middle. This had almost completely ditched all the Fifties excesses and was definitely a clean, musclebound sedan for the Sixties. And yet, again, so many collectors and classic fans would climb over a '61 to get to a '57, unless the '61 happened to be sporting the new 409 motor...

For years these '58 to '61 models have been out in the wilds, but now they're coming out from the Tri-Chevy's shadow as classics in their own right, and that means that prices are heading skywards. Should you get on the bandwagon now, or is this a passing fad? We asked Stuart Homan, Martin Mumford and Gary Janes

"If it's come from a wet state, or has been over here for any length of time, then rust will be a problem. The wheel arches, the deck between the rear window and the bootlid, parcel shelf and boot floor are likely to be the first places to go. The rear windscreen seal leaks, more so on the 1959 and '60 cars." - MM

"The rear arches rust, especially at the top, and the boot floor can rust through, usually right at the back, at the seam where it meets the taillight panel. The latter is usually because the boot lid seal has shrunk over the years, and the lip that it sits in rusts on the '59-'61 cars." - GJ

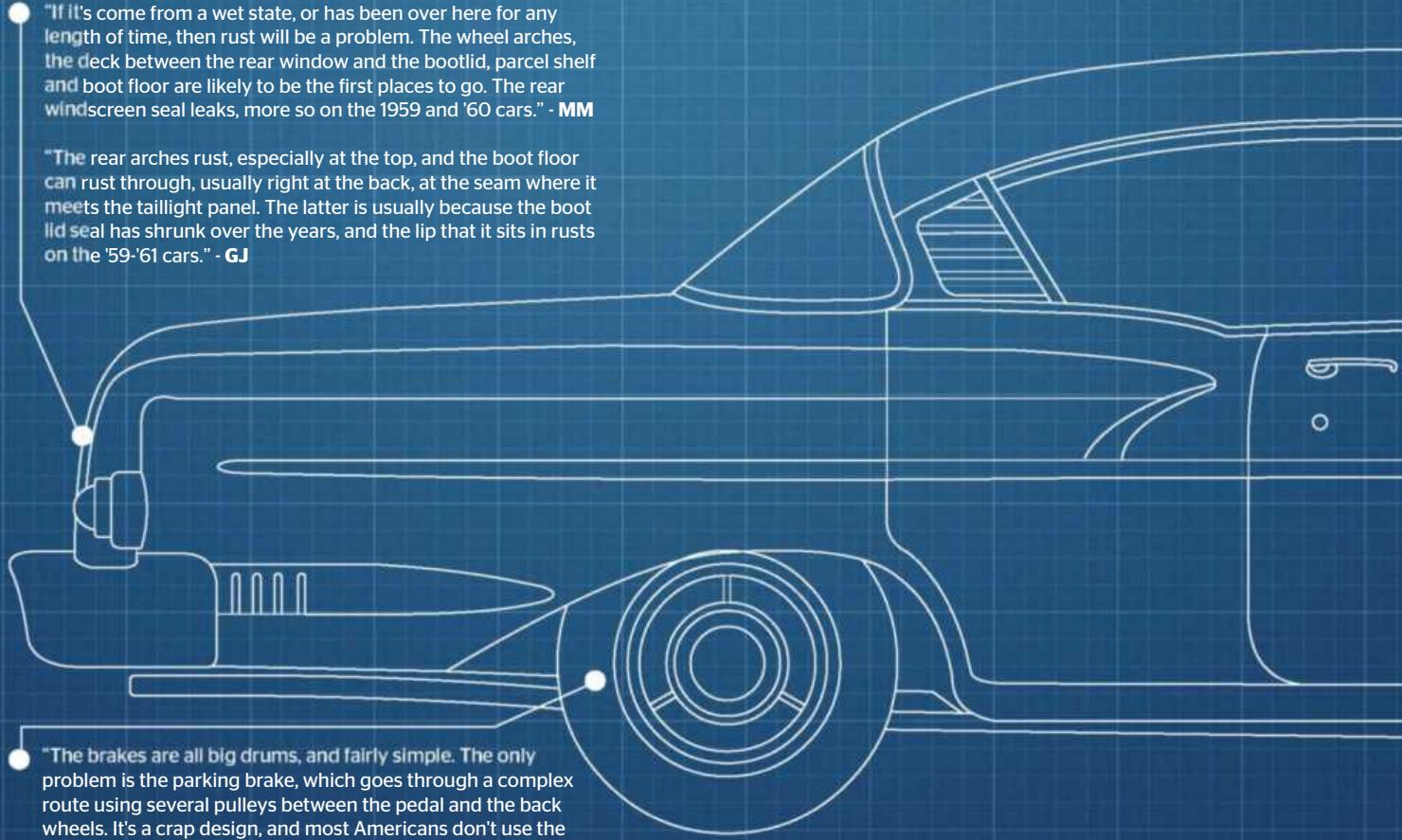
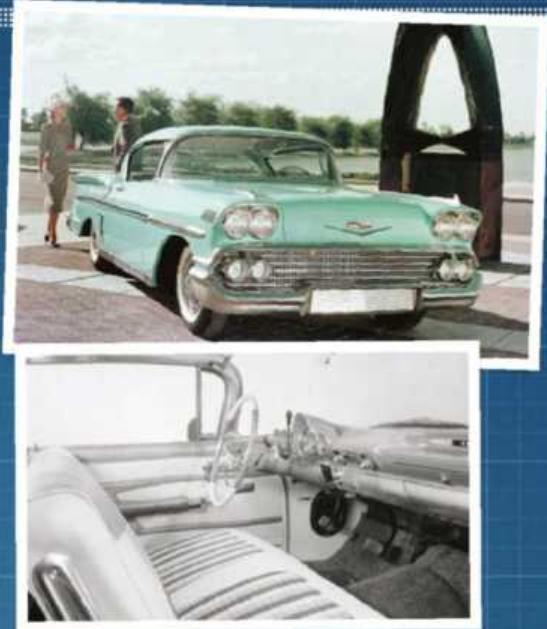
"The brakes are all big drums, and fairly simple. The only problem is the parking brake, which goes through a complex route using several pulleys between the pedal and the back wheels. It's a crap design, and most Americans don't use the parking brake; they just drop the gear lever into Park, so the parking brake will probably be seized up." - GJ

Thanks

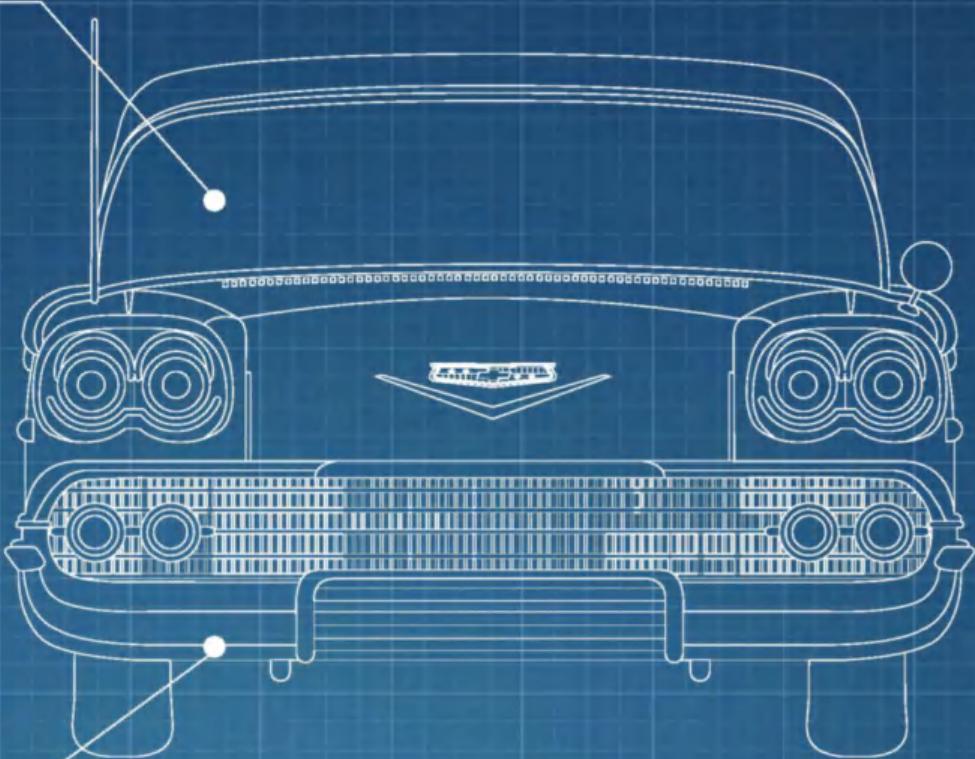
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Martin, Ultimate Spares,
01953 601410, www.ultimatespares.co.uk

Gary, Mid-Century Motors,
07970 636986, www.midcenturymotors.co.uk



"The wraparound windscreens is fine, unless you break it! They're available, but not cheap, and not an amateur job to fit. Side windows can be a problem to find, but they're flat glass so can be custom cut." - MM



"The chrome was very good on these cars, but after 50-odd years you're unlikely to find any that are totally undamaged; some may even have been overpolished, which lets rust creep in. Rechroming is expensive, and not all chrome platers have tanks big enough to fit parts like these bumpers in. The side trim is mostly polished stainless and will last." - MM

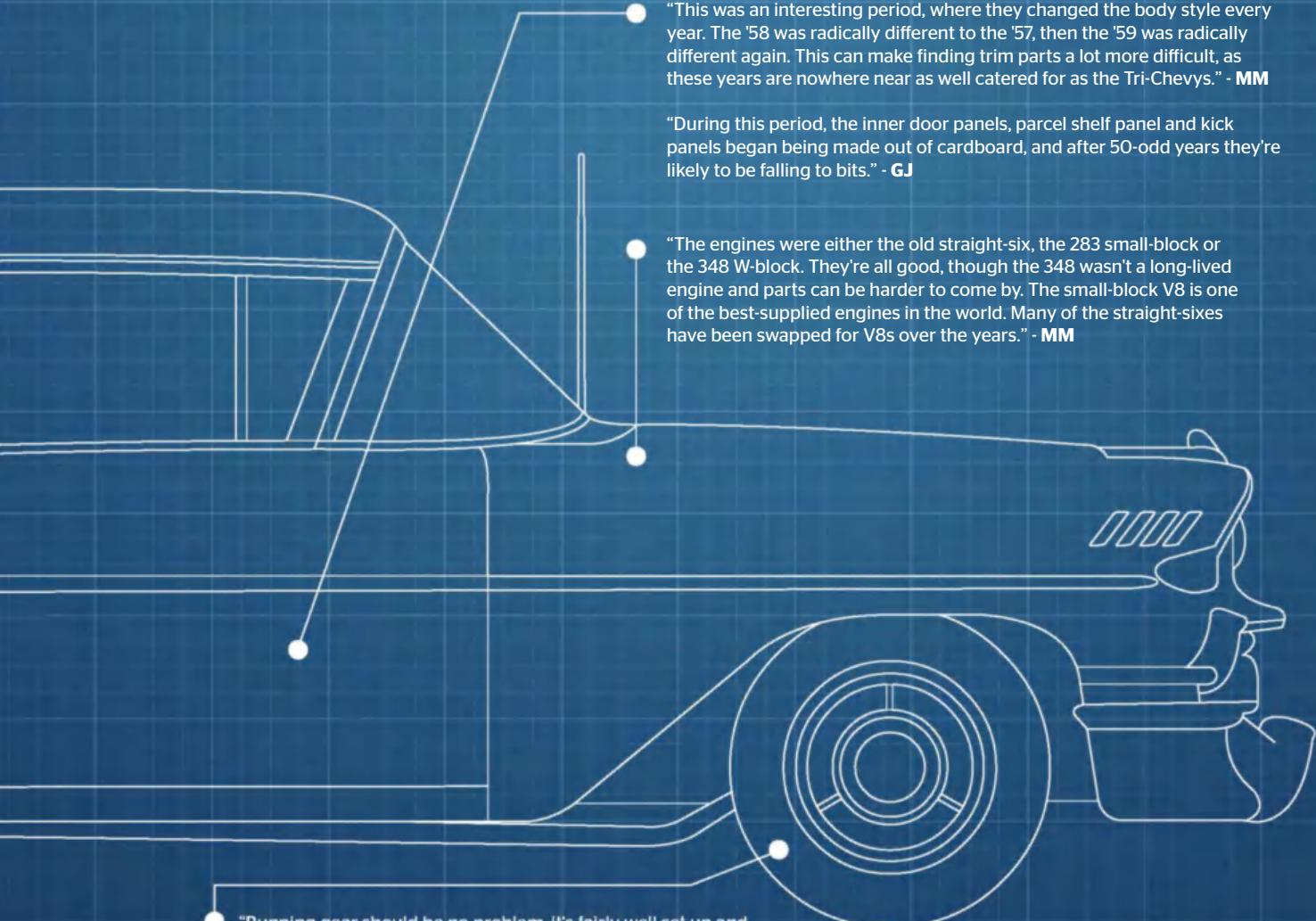
"The leading edge of the front wings above the headlamps is a mud-trap and they often rust out, so look out for filler here. Likewise the leading edge of the bonnet, and inside the battery tray." - GJ

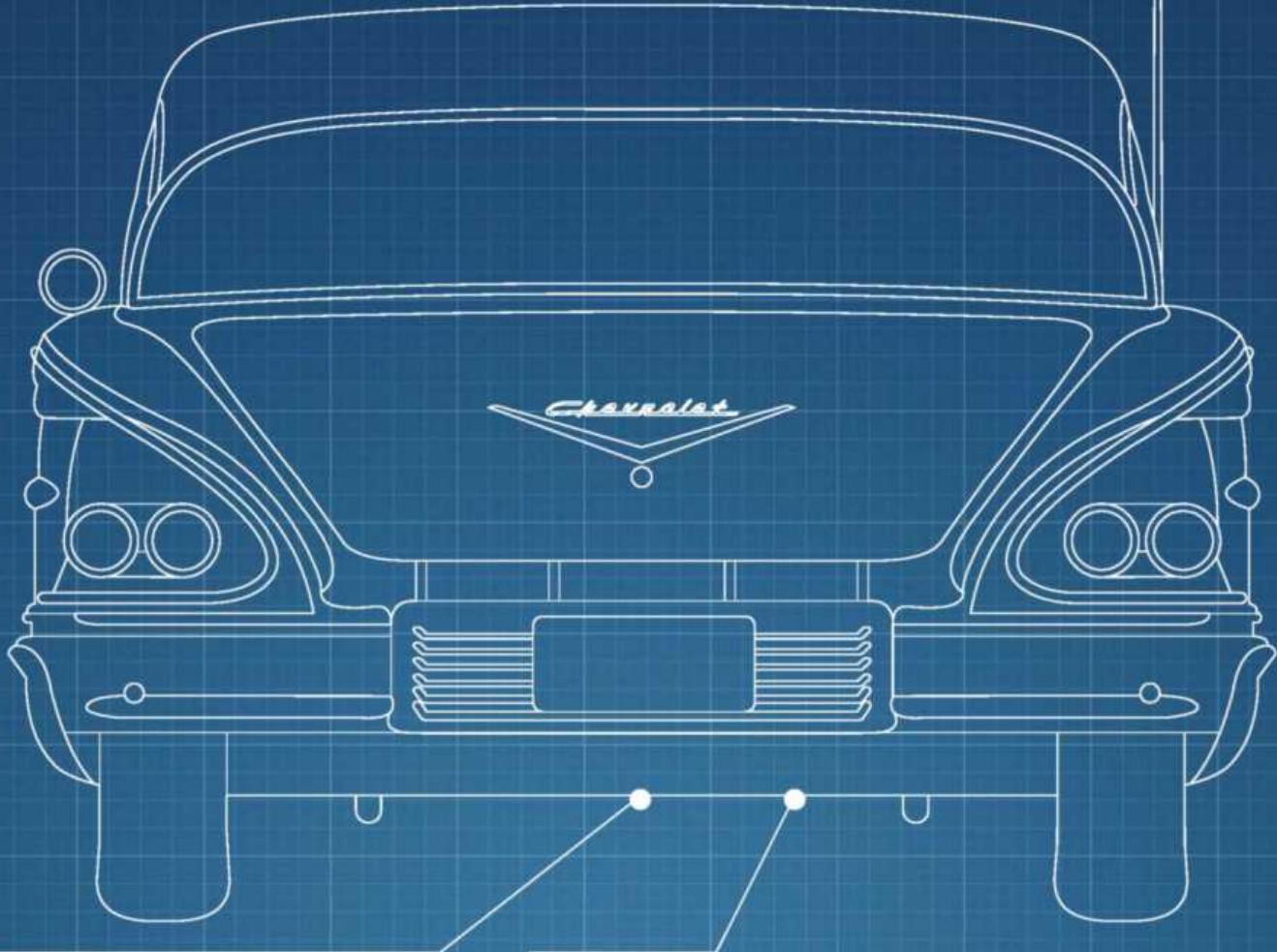
"This was an interesting period, where they changed the body style every year. The '58 was radically different to the '57, then the '59 was radically different again. This can make finding trim parts a lot more difficult, as these years are nowhere near as well catered for as the Tri-Chevys." - MM

"During this period, the inner door panels, parcel shelf panel and kick panels began being made out of cardboard, and after 50-odd years they're likely to be falling to bits." - GJ

"The engines were either the old straight-six, the 283 small-block or the 348 W-block. They're all good, though the 348 wasn't a long-lived engine and parts can be harder to come by. The small-block V8 is one of the best-supplied engines in the world. Many of the straight-sixes have been swapped for V8s over the years." - MM

"Running gear should be no problem, it's fairly well set up and parts are available. You might struggle for steering parts on the factory right-hand-drive cars, but anything's doable." - MM





"Most of these cars would have come with a two-speed Powerglide automatic, which is a tough transmission with few moving parts and little to go wrong. The old aluminium-cased 'Glide has been popular with drag racers for decades. Most of them will let you do 70mph in first gear!" - MM

"The X-frame chassis is a substantial piece and very tough unless it's had a hard life weather-wise. The exhaust runs through holes in the X-frame, so fitting can be a pain and big-bore aftermarket pipes can chatter unless hung perfectly. Floorpans can rot through if it's been damp or stood for a long time." - MM

"Because of the X-shaped chassis, you have a big, wide body on a narrow chassis, so the inner sills are carrying a lot of weight and can suffer. Check for rust and stress where the floorpans join the sills." - GJ

Conclusion

"All the two-doors are getting to be big money, now - '58 and '59 Impala hardtops are a fortune; convertibles even more so. A mint '58 Impala convertible can fetch up to \$150,000 at auction. The '58s and '59s are sought after, likewise the '61 bubbletop, and I'd put the '62s in the same category, the last of the wraparound screen cars. It's crucial to get a car that's as rust-free as possible, one that's been looked after. These were simple, everyman cars in their day, and there are a lot of bangers about while nice ones are expensive. Florida cars tend to rust in hidden places because of the humidity; north-eastern cars rust everywhere because of the salt. Cars in California, especially '58s and '59s, can have come from anywhere - people have dug them up from all across the States and brought them to California for the lowrider guys who will buy anything with an Impala badge on."

The X-frame chassis is tried and tested, and nothing to worry about, while all the engines are nice. The 348 is the best, if you can find one. There's not much that can't be bought for these cars, all the glass and trim is available repro or second-hand, so the key is to find the nicest car you can afford. I'd stay away from anything that's been heavily modified in the States, as anything cheap is likely to be rubbish. If you're not too fussy about what model or year you have, step down a body style or year and you can pick up a bargain. While they're big money in the States, they don't command the same money over here. You can get a nice early Biscayne or Delray for around £15,000, while a four-door '60 with a straight-six and auto could be had for as little as £8,000." - SH

"There seem to be quite a few '58s about, plus Buicks and Oldsmobiles from the same year. For a project that really wants some work, you're starting at about £4,000 for a base-model, and the prices just go up from there. The '59 is the most popular, as they're fabulous-looking cars but there seem to be fewer about now - I suspect many have gone to Europe or Scandinavia. The '60 is not so desirable, as Chevy took away some of the features that made the '59 so handsome, so the '59 will always hold its money better. Also, they're big cars, and unlikely to fit in the average UK garage!" - MM

"The Americans love Chevrolets, consequently there's a massive market for them and there's not much you can't get off the shelf for them. When looking in the States, you don't see that many '58s - the '59s and '60s seem to have survived much better. The '61 is the forgotten model, because it's stuck in the middle with the fins'n'chrome on one side and the squarer, lowrider-style models on the other. I think they're a very stylish car, and not that expensive. You can still get a complete project car for around the £3,500 mark, though that will probably be a four-door, six-cylinder. You could have something on the road for £4,000-6,000. You can't go wrong with the 1958-1964 Chevrolets: they're simple and straightforward, pretty much everything is available for them and they're going up in value all the time. You can't buy a cheap Tri-Chevy any more, but you needn't pay a fortune for one of these ... at the moment." - GJ



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Words & photography: Dave Smith

Servicing 101



It seems there are many out there who don't know the first thing about looking after their cars. This is fine - nobody is born knowing this stuff - but even doing basic servicing can help you to really understand and connect with your car. Here are some scheduled service jobs you can do with basic tools and just one cup of tea.

Air Filter

DIFFICULTY: **COCK-UP POTENTIAL:**

Changing the air filter is one of the first items on the scheduled service list. On carburettor engines you really can't miss 'em - they're usually in the middle of the engine in the middle of the bay - but on fuel-injected engines you may have to follow the trunking. Carefully unfasten the housing, which may just be clipped together, and remove the old filter (1). Just check how much crud they accumulate (2)! If it's a plain paper filter, throw the old

one away, fit a new one and put everything back together. If it's a K&N-type performance filter, you can clean it and refit it.

PCV Valve

DIFFICULTY: **COCK-UP POTENTIAL:**

Changing the PCV valve is not often on the servicing schedule, but they're only a couple of quid and can make a difference. On most older V-engines they're in one of the rocker covers, and have a pipe leading to the intake somewhere. On some other cars, they can be hiding under the plenum of the intake manifold. Just find the valve, remove the pipe (3) and pull the old PCV out of its rubber grommet. Take it easy, as the rubber grommet may be old and brittle - if it comes apart, you'll need a new one. Put a little smudge of oil or grease on the tip of the new valve (4) because you want it to slip nicely into the rubber grommet, NOT push the grommet inside the rocker cover! Re-attach the pipe, and you're done.

Fuel Filter

DIFFICULTY: **COCK-UP POTENTIAL:**

Many older, carburetted cars had a fuel filter in the mechanical fuel pump; some had one in the fuel inlet to the carburettor; some had a universal one spliced into the fuel pipe at some point later on; some had none at all. The pump or carb filters can be removed, cleaned and replaced; the universal ones are only a pound or two from your local factors and can just be replaced. Fuel filters on fuel-injected cars can be critical though, and should be replaced as part of a major service.

They're usually a steel canister as they operate under high fuel pressure, and they're usually hidden out of harm's way (5). First, do some research and find out if the fuelling system holds residual pressure with the engine off, and if so, is there a way to release this pressure. Some cars use flexible nylon fuel pipes with plastic clips to hold

the pipe onto the filter, while some, like this one, use steel pipes and unions. Give them a good drenching in penetrating fluid (6), because if the unions round-off or otherwise get ruined while you're undoing them, or, worse still, you twist and split the fuel pipe, your one-brew job has turned expensive and time consuming... Ideally use a flare nut or pipe nut spanner (7).

Undoing the pipes is likely to result in fuel dribbling out (8), so have something to catch it in, and if you need me to tell you that petrol is flammable and hazardous, then you should probably leave the job to someone else... Golf tees are handy to have around to plug pipes with. Gently remove the old filter from its bracket (which is likely to be made of thin metal, and probably rusty) and fit the new one, making sure it's the right way around. There's usually an arrow on the filter showing direction of flow. Use a bit of grease on the union threads, reconnect everything, then start the engine and check for leaks. A job well done!



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S Auto
(LEFT HAND DRIVE)



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Auto



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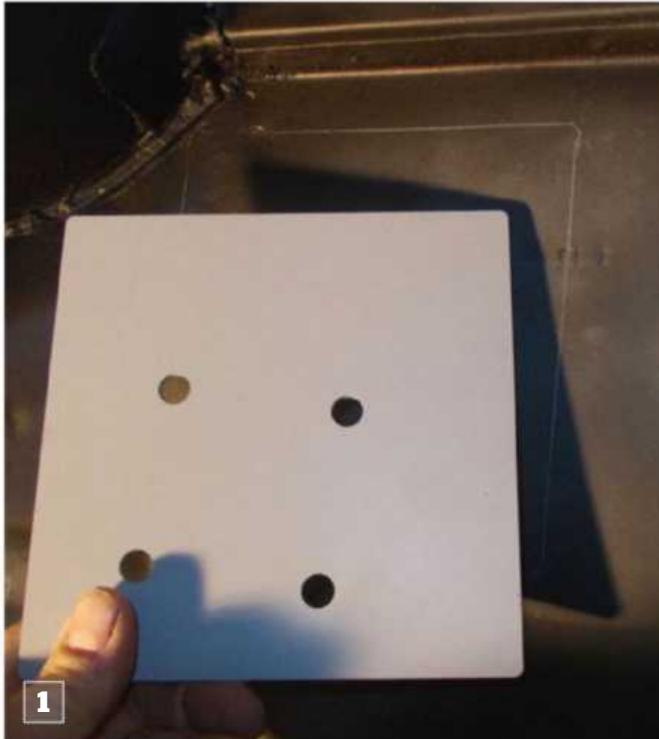
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HOW TO

Brace Yourself Part II



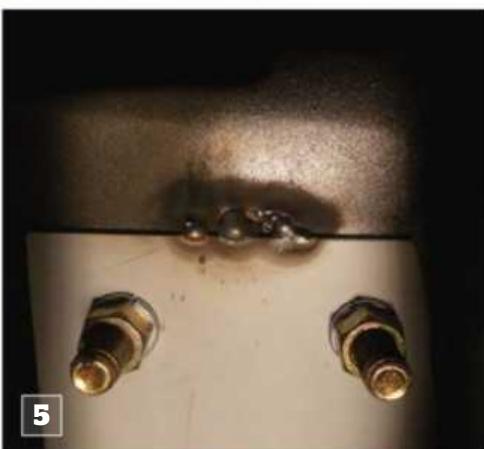
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The next stage of trying to add some strength to Project 13/30's body shell.

Words & photography: Dave Smith

It's time to break out the welder for the bracing plates that I prepared in the last instalment. I hate welding, so I have neither the skill nor inclination, but it's something I can't avoid so here goes!

First, I marked where the inner bracing plate goes on the floorpan (1) and cleaned the area back to bare metal. I drilled a couple of extra holes in the inner plates for plug welding, then bolted through the inner and outer bracing plate (2), waiting until after I'd fitted and torqued the lower arm bolt (3) before fully tightening the through-floor

bolts. I added a couple of welds to the outer brackets (4) with my new welder (which made the job so much more pleasant than the old one), which was great when tacking to the thick chassis member, but trying to weld a 4mm plate to a 1mm floorpan led to some blow-through (5), even with the MIG turned down a couple of notches.

This would become a feature of the process - trying to weld thick plate to thin floor was very tricky. With the inner plate, I had to strike the weld onto the thick plate first, then quickly try to stitch across to the floorpan

before it burned through (6). The results weren't pretty, but should be strong enough. I tried the same technique on the upper inner plates, plus I welded the tapered collars to the plates (7) then trimmed the excess length off the bolts (8). After a coat of primer, it didn't look too hideous (9), and there'll be some seam-sealer to come. It would have been this seam-sealer (10), but it seems the lid wasn't shut too tightly when I last used it ... erm, about four years ago. I also added some tack-welds to the upper outer plates, which was a little easier as the metal was a

good deal thicker (11), then dosed that with etch primer, too.

Then it was time to address the floorpan around the seat bolts, the only real problem with the shell. The front seats bolt down at the four corners; the front bolts fix into a strong box section, but the rear bolts go through a thin, stretched floorpan with a rather half-hearted strengthening plate. Throw yourself into the drivers seat too carelessly, especially if your gluteus is a bit more maximus than it needs to be, and the floorpan can crack like this (12). There were multiple splits, covering about a square foot

(13). It had been suggested to me that I'd have been better off buying a new floorpan section or trying to cut a good piece from another car, but I thought I'd quite like to try to repair the old piece.

First, I needed to bring the busted part up to meet the floorpan, rather than dragging the pan down to meet the broken section, so I rigged up a bridge out of some old bits of 2x2 (14) and used some long screws (15) to draw the section up tight to

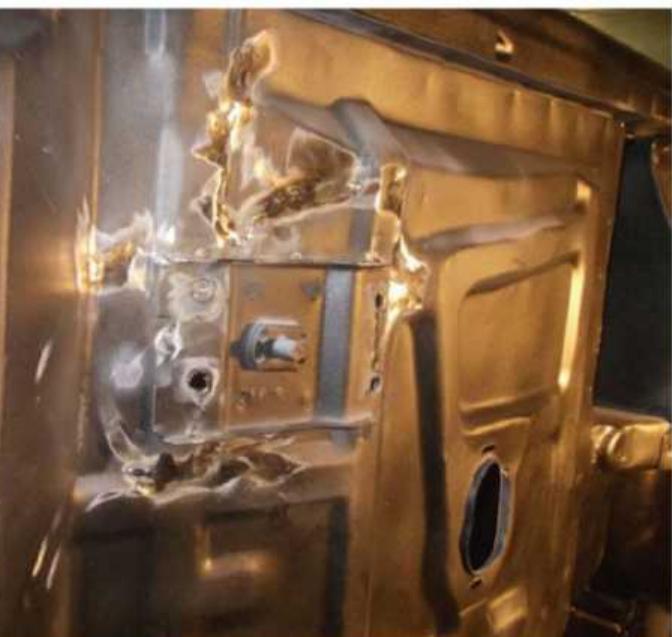
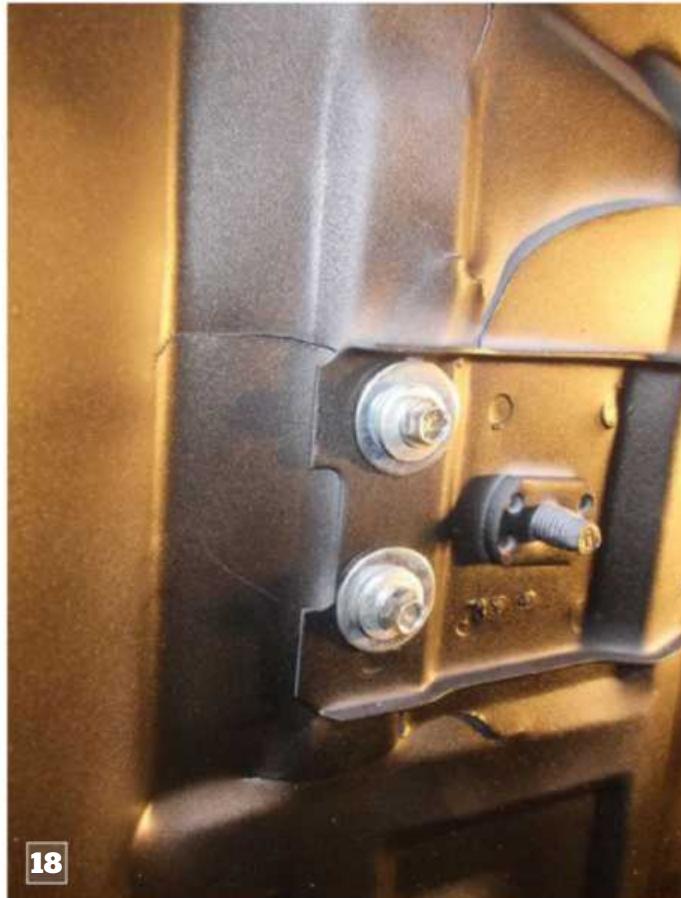
the floorpan (16). A nut and bolt with some big penny washers dragged the rearmost split (17) together. Again, the metal is really thin, so the welder needed to be on a very low setting and the wire speed turned down, and I was still blowing through in places where the metal had stretched, but eventually I got all the splits welded up (18). I also added a few extra tacks to the half-hearted bracing piece, to supplement the four shonky factory spot-welds. →



I then welded the splits from the inside, too (19). This was slightly easier, the weld beads on the outside helping to soak up the heat. There was also a small split on the box section around the front left mounting bolt, which I welded up, too (20). It all needed grinding down and smoothing off, but by this point it was 10pm and I didn't think the neighbours would thank me for firing up the grinder.

The next time, when I used a sanding flap wheel on the

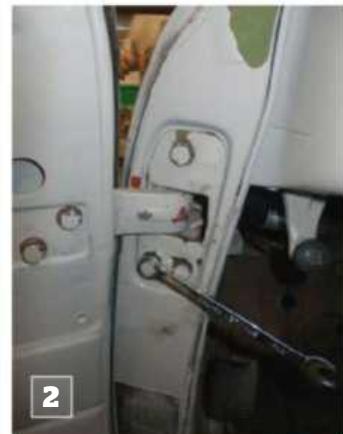
grinder to level the welds (21), the truth was pretty stark. I had created almost as many holes as I'd sealed, both metal and joins being still rather weak. It seems I'd wasted a lot of time welding this lot up, and would have been far better following the advice I'd been given in the first place and welding in either a complete new (or good, used) section. I have a donor car, so perhaps I'd be as well to check out its floorpan, but that will have to wait for next time. **ACM**



HOW TO Pulling The Pin

THANKS

Wacky Racers
01384 571571



Repairing a ruined hinge on a Fifties Chevy truck door

Words & photography: Dave Smith

Recently, Wacky Racers had a '54 Chevy truck in whose driver's side door had a nasty habit of flying open whilst driving! The main cause of this was later diagnosed - the door was from an earlier truck, so the catch didn't match the latch on the door jamb - but part of the problem was that the top hinge had dropped so much that the catch was beating hell out of the latch every time the door was closed. Fifties trucks were never renowned for their perfect panel gaps anyway, but this one was way out of line.

There's no flat part on the bottom of the door frame, so using a wad of rags on a trolley jack (1), we supported the weight of the door then began unbolting the hinges from the door frame and A-pillar (2). With the door safely out of the way, the problem

was clear to see (3). For a start, a bead of weld indicates that this hinge had already been repaired, followed closely by the wear gap between the pin and the body of the hinge. The pin is supposed to sit still in the outer frame, while the inner part of the hinge, the part that bolts to the door, pivots around it. In this case, the pin had seized into the inner part, and been chafing away at the outer. Not good.

With the hinge in a vice, Wacky tried tapping the pin out, but it was seized solid. A little persuasion from the gas-axe (4) got the inner hinge glowing nicely (5), then a few clouts from a hammer and punch (6) drifted it out. After a bit of a clean-up on the wire wheel, Wacky measured the pin (7). In this pic, you can see the knurled shoulder at the top →



of the pin that's supposed to hold the pin still in the outer hinge; the knurls have worn almost completely away.

The worn pin measured just over 0.3", or just slightly under 8mm. This was perfect, as it meant the hinge could be drilled out and an M8 bolt used as a pin. The outer hinge was already worn oversize (8) so the inner part was drilled to 8mm (9), the outer hinge squeezed a little in a vice to take out some of the play (10), then the faces cleaned and sanded (11). Then it was all greased, reassembled and trial-fitted (12). The excess length of the bolt needed to be trimmed

to fit the recess in the A-pillar, then the nut and bolt-head were tack-welded to the outer hinge (13) to keep them in place. A coat of rustproofing primer and a topcoat of black (14), and it was ready to be refitted.

This method is not as straightforward as replacing the hinge, which will have to be done eventually, but it will certainly serve for another good few years yet, and it made hanging and re-aligning the door far easier. However, for the sake of a drop of oil or grease or a squirt of WD40 on the hinges every few months, this would not have needed doing at all! **ACM**



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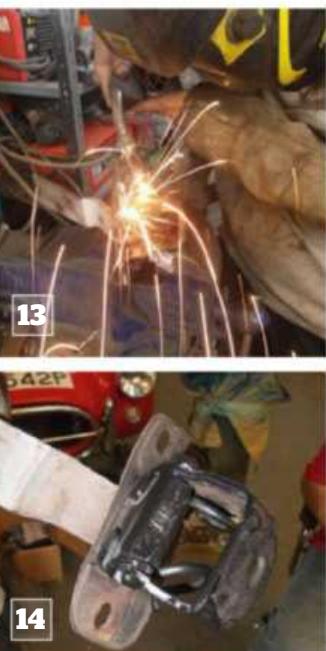
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11



12



13



14

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TALES FROM THE GARAGES OF THE PEOPLE WHO WORK ON, AND CONTRIBUTE TO, AMERICAN CAR MAGAZINE

Dave Smith, Editor
1990 Ford Mustang LX



I am not an accomplished welder. I learned to MIG weld many, many years ago because, when I were a lad, I could only afford bangers and doing your own welding was necessary when the MkIV Cortinas you used to drive needed new sills for every MoT. Even then, my welding was dreadful, but some

of this I could put down to my welder, a Clarke 100E that was second-hand when I bought it 20-odd years ago, and use, abuse and zero maintenance meant that any welding job was a lottery. In the end, the welder itself required half an hour's repair work for every five minutes of welding, and it felt as

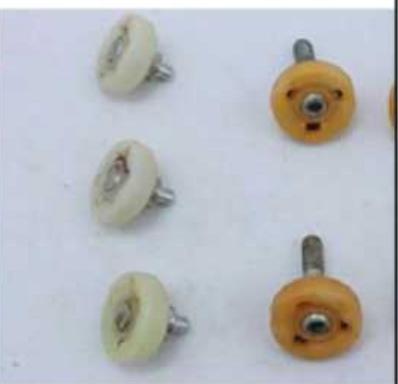
though the wire feed roller had turned hexagonal.

Then along came a new Clarke 160TM Turbo MIG from Machine Mart. See the clouds part, the rays of sunshine break through and the choirs of heaven hit a joyous, harmonious note. After a minimal amount of assembly, it was ready to go, and suddenly

welding is almost a pleasure. My God, even my welding - which is clumsy by any measure - looks good. Imagine you'd spent the last 20 years with a knackered old bicycle. It's ruined, but you make do with it because you think that that's as good as it's going to get. Then someone comes along and hands you a Honda Fireblade...

Problems? None really, although I would have liked a slightly more sturdy earth clamp, and it comes without a plug - it's suggested that you hard-wire it to a 16A 230V supply. This wasn't an option for me, so I fitted a 13A plug and it's doing fine so far. It's lovely to use, I've surprised myself with some of my welding, and having the machine on casters with the bottle rack at the back makes it easy enough to move around a crowded workshop. I think I'm in love. I should give Clarke a plug (even though they didn't give me one. Ha!) and say that their wide range of tools and machinery is available from Machine Mart stores across the UK - see www.machinemart.co.uk.

Kev Carrington, Contributor
1973 Plymouth Duster



Well the light of day is getting shorter and I can either get depressed or get in the garage... option 2 works for me! For the Duster I have ordered my Window Roller Kit to fix the rattle I mentioned last month, and I have also ordered a pair of bottom ball joints. These don't need replacing but they are the only suspension parts I haven't

replaced on the front end so I thought, why not?

On my last two show runs I noticed the temperature seemed to be going up a bit. This was even worse when taking my time navigating the 78 inches between my house and my neighbours, and water is always dripping out of the drip tube. We popped the bonnet when

the car was hot and my son, Matt, squeezed the top hose... no pressure whatsoever. About £9 later my new radiator cap was fitted and voila, she makes pressure and runs cooler now. What I do find amazing is that I have been on two long runs in the car and it never threatened to boil over, and yet the system was not pressurising.

I do have some sad news. A really good friend offered me a good price for the Mustang and she was just sat outside and hardly used, so I let her go. The good thing is we will still maintain her for him and I'll see her regularly. I guess this will be the last article before the festivities, so here's wishing you all a very Merry Christmas. Cheers!


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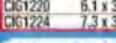
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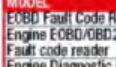
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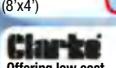
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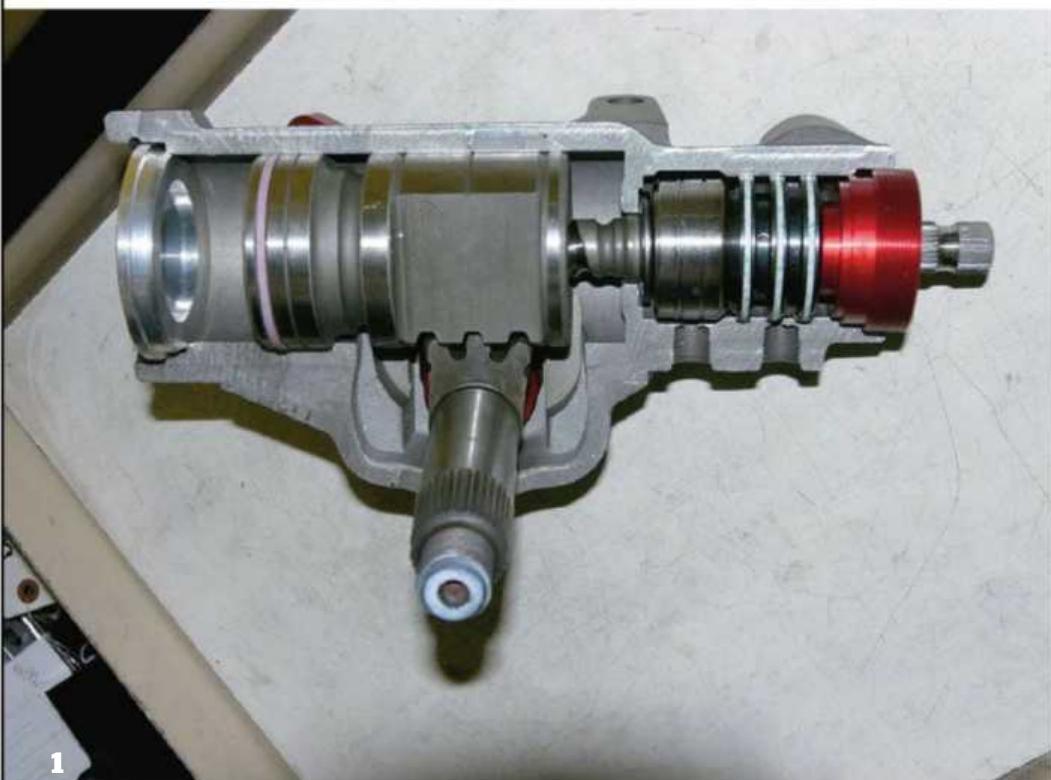


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Sloppy steering could be a matter of a quick adjustment

Words & photography: Dave Smith



1

The Worm Turns

American cars have used a steering box arrangement for decades. Long after the rest of the world had turned to the lighter and more accurate rack and pinion system, American manufacturers were using a steering box bolted to the chassis, and a system of a Pitman arm, an idler arm, a drag link and two tie-rods. It was tough, it was reliable and if it ain't broke... Millions upon millions of American vehicles were built using steering systems that were broadly the same. It also makes a lot of sense on SUVs, off-roaders and trucks where you might need extra suspension articulation that rack and pinion can't provide.

Right, let's look at the steering box itself. It's usually bolted to the inside of the chassis rail, in the engine bay. This is a cutaway steering box (1), although it's upside down - in situ, the shaft pointing towards you in the photo would be pointing down. The steering wheel and column provides the steering input - the column is attached to the splined input shaft at the right of the photo by a universal joint or

strong, flexible 'rag' joint. Inside the body of the steering box, this shaft has a coarse thread, or 'worm', cut into it - you can just see this in the middle of pic 1. As you turn the steering wheel, this threaded shaft turns and moves the 'rack nut' - the big, piston-like part - up and down the thread. Between the worm and the rack nut are dozens of ball bearings which reduce the friction between the two, and run in channels in and around the rack

nut, hence this is a 'recirculating ball' steering box. One side of the rack nut has gear teeth cut into it, and these teeth mesh with another set of teeth on the top of a shaft, often called a 'sector shaft' - the part pointing towards you in the photo. As the rack nut moves up and down the worm, it turns the sector shaft.

On the bottom of the sector shaft is another set of splines; the Pitman arm (2) mounts onto these splines, and that's what



2

moves the drag link and tie rods left and right, and steers the front wheels. Mostly the Pitman arm moves in a horizontal plane, left to right, but in some cases it moves in a vertical plane, fore and aft, and uses a bell-crank to provide the steering force.

American cars were never best known for their direct steering, and a bit of wander is par for the course. Steering boxes usually have an adjuster on the top that adjusts the lash between the rack nut and the sector shaft gear; however, this needs to be done carefully. Using a hex bit to hold the central shaft in place, undo the lock nut (3). Turning the shaft clockwise reduces the lash; anticlockwise increases it. Bear in mind, though, that most of the wear will be in the straight-ahead position, and a quarter of a turn on the adjuster takes up a hell of a lot of lash. Don't just wind it in until the adjuster bottoms out, as this will increase friction and wear inside the box and you might find that the steering won't go anywhere near maximum lock any more. Try a quarter of a turn, then check the steering from lock to lock, then another quarter, then check again, and so on. When it's just right, hold the adjuster still and tighten the lock nut. Although you might find that this improves matters, chances are high that there'll be plenty of wander - this is most likely down to one of the seven ball joints in the steering system, or possibly even poor front suspension alignment.



3



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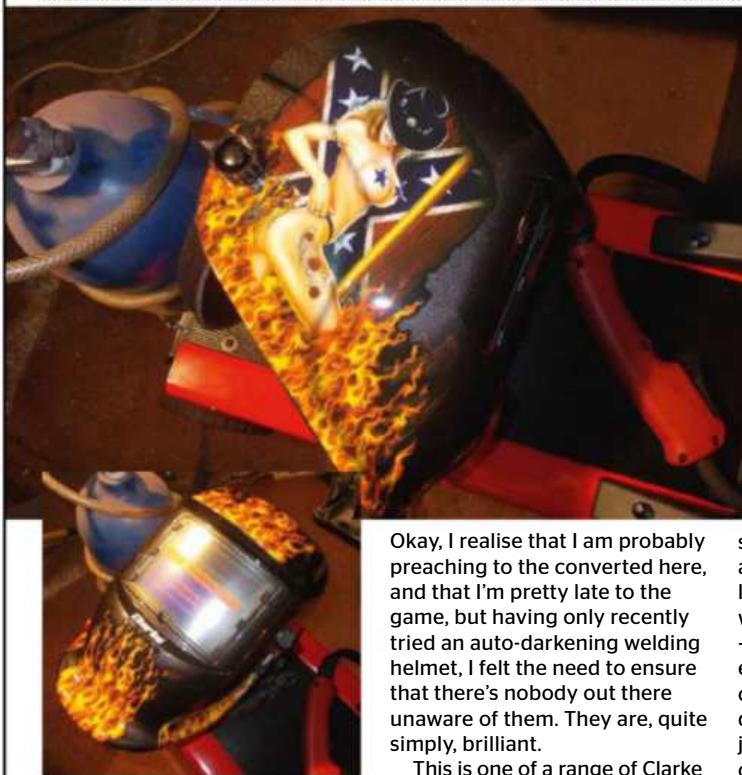
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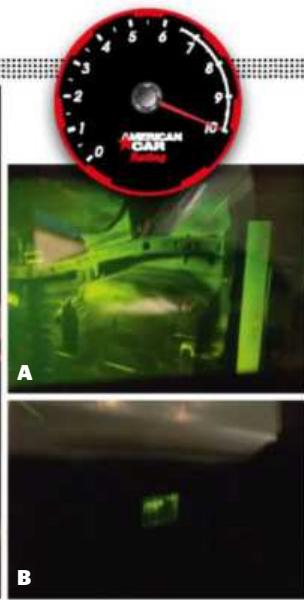
TRIED 'N' TESTED

Clarke GWH5 Welding Helmet



Okay, I realise that I am probably preaching to the converted here, and that I'm pretty late to the game, but having only recently tried an auto-darkening welding helmet, I felt the need to ensure that there's nobody out there unaware of them. They are, quite simply, brilliant.

This is one of a range of Clarke



solar-powered helmets. Welding arcs give off a hell of a lot of UV light – which is why you have to wear a mask in the first place – so it makes sense to use that energy for something. In this case it's used to power the auto-darkening glass. When you're just working, the glass has a bit of a night-vision-goggles look to

TRIED 'N' TESTED

Ring 12V Vacuum Cleaner



Let's get one thing straight from the off: a 12-volt vacuum cleaner is unlikely to ever be as effective as a domestic or industrial vacuum. There's only so much you can achieve with a 15 watt motor, so if you're expecting a machine that can suck cats' eyes out of the road, too bad. This little kit is more light-duty.

I tried it on my daily. Sadly, this photo is not staged; it really was that filthy. I can't be the only driver whose passenger footwell doubles as a landfill? Once all the rubbish was chucked, I unpacked

the vac and all its attachments, plugged it in and away we went. There's an extra attachment for carpets which has a powered, rotating brush built in, and this seemed to be just the job. The worst of the muck came up, but the really ingrained stuff wasn't for shifting.

If you're looking for a nicely portable vacuum to take to shows, that can give your interior a good once-over before the judges come around, then this is the one. There are plenty of extension nozzles and whatnot



to really get into all the corners, and it'd probably be a handy thing to have in the caravan, too. If you're looking to shift years of grime, neglect and ground-in mud, then stick to Henry. An excellent Christmas gift for a car-proud petrolhead.

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it (A), but the second you strike an arc (or look directly at a 500w halogen lamp, in this case) it darkens to this (B). Obviously this is a less-than-brilliant example using a digital camera inside the helmet – it's a lot clearer in real life. It works as a grinding mask, too. They have a rotary dial-adjustable padded headband and come in a range of styles, from plain black through to this one, adorned with a charming young lady who is dressed in a completely unsuitable fashion for welding duties.

Frankly, I have no idea how I managed before this helmet. If you've been using a cheapo one or, worse still, the ridiculous hand-held one that comes free with most hobby MIGs, then launch it in the bin, invest in one of these and you won't be sorry. I doubt I'll ever find pleasure in welding, but this helmet makes the job 50% easier and has improved my pitiful welding ability by about 50% along the way. I can't recommend them enough.

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What's In The Workshop

Lowrider

Mr Whitewalls' gaff is half industrial unit, half toybox

THANKS:
Mr Whitewalls,
www.mrwhitewalls.com



Recently, I went to visit a chap called Ant Edensor, better known as Mr Whitewalls, at his premises in Stafford. Ant can whitewall pretty much any tyre you put his way, or he can do red or gold bands, almost anything you want, in fact. He did show me how he does it, and I was really

impressed, but rather than try to cram all that into this one page, I'll save that walk-through for a later date and we'll just have a look around his workshop.

Ant's a lowrider fan, and pride of place goes to the ultimate lowrider, a '64 Chevy Impala two-door hardtop. Powered by a 283

V8, Ant found this beauty almost on his doorstep, at a dealer in Stoke. After a few months of ownership, he's currently wavering between putting it on air suspension or juice.

Elsewhere, there's the grooviest little red wagon, with lawnmower power, a healthy

rake and, naturally, whiteband tyres. Ant also attends many shows over the course of the year, so even his caravan is tricked out with chequered wrap, red steels and whitebands. If he put the caravan on air to match the Impala, that would be a showstopper.



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Brace, Brace

New from UMI Performance we have a brace of braces for the rear shock towers on 1964-1972 GM A-bodies and 1978-1988 G-bodies.

Made from strong 1.25" tube and 3/16" laser-cut brackets, these braces are jig-built for an easy bolt-in fit, first time, and should clear all popular exhaust systems. They're ideal for both stock, aftermarket and especially coil-over suspension systems, but note that they won't fit wagons or El Caminos. See www.umiperformance.com and speak to your importer.



Showroom To Strip

Although the right-hooking 2015 Mustang hasn't officially reached these shores yet, the S550 is going great guns in the States and there's already a whole raft of modification parts to suit.

BMR Suspension is right there in the vanguard - check out their lowering handling springs for the 2015-up Mustang. These CNC cold-wound chrome-silicon high-tensile linear-rate springs will drop your new V8 'Stang but still give a smooth ride. If the track is your destination, there are drag race lowering springs, too, made to the same spec but a slightly lower rate for weight transfer. They also have an NHRA-approved bolt-in driveshaft safety loop that won't interfere with stock or aftermarket short shifters, and billet 6061-T6 aluminium vertical suspension links with either a Delrin bushing at either end or a Delrin/spherical bearing combo that will take as hard a launch as you can chuck at them without deflecting like the stock stamped steel part. If you plan on beating on your brand new Mustang, see www.bmrsuspension.com and get the right parts for the job.



Rallye Forth

Although they've been out of production for decades, the old GM Rallye wheel still looks good on almost any Chevy.

Now US Wheel are making their tribute, and in a range of modern sizes - 14, 15 and 16-inch diameters with an array of widths, bolt patterns and offsets to suit most cars, even with big brake conversions.

They come either primed and ready to paint, in traditional silver or in brilliant chrome, and US Wheel also make centre caps, wheel nuts and hub covers to suit. Find them at www.summitracing.com.



Gift Wrap

There are always new products from Design Engineering to protect your machine, so here are a couple of new ones.

First, the Titanium Protect-A-Sleeve, a product that already offers the best protection on the market for wires, cables and plumbing, is now available in diameters of one or two inches to suit heater and radiator hoses, too. Heat, oil and chemical resistant with shrink tube end sealant, it'll look good doing its job. Turbos are great for performance; they're also great at baking everything under the bonnet, so how about the DEI Onyx black turbo shield? They protect your underbonnet, and also keep the turbo at a constant temperature to maximise efficiency, minimise lag, and make for easier tuning. Now available in smaller sizes, there's a sizing chart on their website at www.designengineering.com. Their 2016 catalogue is out now, so check it out.



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AAM have got the axle components you need to make your already-tough American truck ready for almost anything up to a direct meteorite strike.

Just check their range of components for 2014 GM V8 truck and SUV axles with the new metric-thread 9.5 and 9.76" rear ring and pinion, offering three new gear sets apiece and two new diff cases for each, plus halfshafts, pinion flanges, the whole nine yards. There are new gear sets for the 9.25" front axle in GM and Ram trucks, too, in 4.56 and 5.13:1 ratios, ideal for those wanting to run huge tyres, with corresponding matching gears available for the 11.5" rear axle. In fact, while you're back there, look out for AAM's TracRite GT helical limited slip diff carrier for the 11.5" with throttle-proportional torque bias, no clutch plates to wear out, and it's compatible with OE ABS, traction and stability controls. They have a similar TracRite diff for the 8.6" axle found in 1999-on smaller GM pick-ups, too. See www.demandaam.com and speak to your importer.

The Quick Fox

The stock factory stamped-steel rear suspension arms on Mustangs are not known for their ability to turn power into traction, but these rear lower arms for 1979-2004 Fox and SN95 Mustangs from Maximum Motorsports are a giant leap forward.

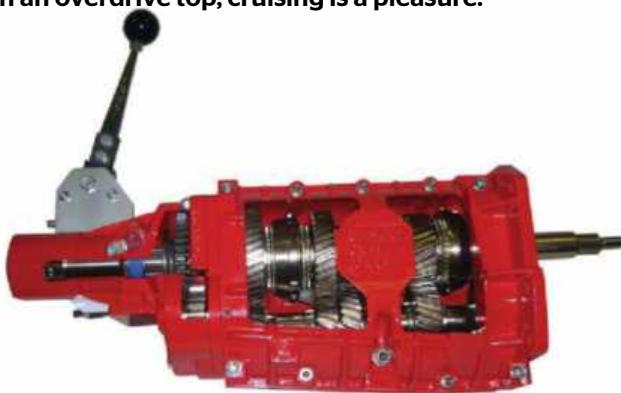
They use a large-diameter steel tube and unique urethane bushings to reduce deflection and wheel hop while still offering the articulation required for a comfortable ride, and there's a version that offers a height-adjustable spring seat, too. Ideal for cars up to 400rwhp, you'll find them at www.maximummotorsports.com so speak to your importer.



The Five Shift Shuffle

Lazy, torquey V8s suit an auto transmission, but for pressing on it's difficult to beat stirring your own cogs, and with an overdrive top, cruising is a pleasure.

Observe, with Richmond Gear's Super Street five-speed manual transmission, perfect for street rods and muscle cars with up to 600ft.lb. of torque, and built into Richmond's own race-proven housing. They're available for small/big Chevys, BOPC V8s, and small/big Fords, with a choice of gear ratios although fifth is a motorway-perfect 0.77:1 ratio. See www.summitracing.com for details.



Forging Ahead

Got a blown LSA motor in your 2009-2014 Cadillac CTS-V, 2012-2014 Camaro ZL1 or Vauxhall VXR8 and want to abuse it even more?

Lingenfelter are offering a forged piston and ring kit that'll take it. Designed to work with a variety of supercharger pulleys and upgrades, they keep the stock compression ratio and oil spray cooling, but the JE pistons and Total Seal rings are much tougher than the factory cast items. See www.lingenfelter.com and speak to your engine builder.

If you're thinking of retro-fitting a late-model GM motor into an older car, here's a handy piece - the Lingenfelter CAN-bus convertor, which converts digital signals into analogue, and allows you to use traditional dash gauges and factory ECU without the wiring nightmare in between. It's a plug-in fit, keeps all the OE sensors and senders, and is infinitely adjustable to configure any aftermarket gauge.



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Pipe Down

Engine swaps are great fun, until it is time to try and get exhaust manifolds to fit.

Fear not, Hedman has your back. Like these new Hedman headers that let you drop a 352-427-cube FE or 429 or 460-cube 385-series Ford big-block torque-monster into a 1954-1972 Ford F-100 pick-up without the headaches. A mid-length low-profile header for the FE and a short-tube header for the 385-series, they use 1.75" mandrel-bent primaries and three-inch collectors to keep the gas moving, while ball-and-socket collector flanges keep it inside, where it belongs. There's a choice of finish and all hardware is included, so see www.hedman.com and speak with your dealer.



Da Bomb

MagnaFlow is well known for its range of sports exhausts, but some cars just don't sound right without the anti-social rumble you only get from old-fashioned glasspack straight-through Cherry-Bomb-style mufflers.

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Four And Six

You can't beat a V8, but you should never discount the good old straight six.

Look at Offenhauser; long has the name adorned some superb high-performance intake manifolds, but they make a whole range to suit the inline sixes, too. Like this one, which lets you bolt a four-barrel carburettor onto a Mopar 170 or 225-cube slant six engine. Most sixers were budget motors, and most came with wheezy single or two-barrel carbs. Bung a four-barrel on and see the difference! Offenhauser also make manifolds for Chevy 216-235 and 194-292 sixes, Ford 223 flatheads and 170-300 OHVs, AMC/Jeep 199-258 and Dodge/Plymouth 218-230 flatheads, so look at the range on www.summitracing.com and make your six-pot sing.



Challengair



As if the Dodge Challenger didn't look mean enough already, AirREX UK now have a fully comprehensive air suspension kit for all V6, R/T and SRT late model Challengers.

Offering all the looks of a fully adjustable air-ride kit with plug'n'play convenience and without the hassle of a custom install, these kits are tough and reliable enough to withstand UK roads and still offer a comfortable ride. There have even been a few kits fitted to the mighty Hellcats! Kits are supplied assembled and leak-tested from the factory, with primary controls – valve block, compressor, air tank and purge valve – in a composite wood casing with smoked acrylic window, and AirREX boast that the whole system can be fitted in one day! This fully digital, wireless system is controlled from a hand-held commander unit and can be infinitely configured for the looks or the go. Find out more at www.airrexuk.co.uk, or call 01933 685840.



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Dark Knight

Our US-based photographer Charlie Lewis finds a Challenger R/T with a whiff of Gotham about it.

Words & photography: Charlie Lewis

This custom 2010 Dodge Challenger R/T boasts Accuair air ride suspension that lays the car on the ground, while the power to back its look comes from the 5.7 Hemi motor pumping out 425hp. The owner of this immaculate Mopar is Scott Ekman from Battle Ground, Washington, and with its aggressively mean stance it's a crowd pleaser. The wheels are American Racing 701 Novas, which came in grey and were

customised by Wheel Kraft NW in hot rod red and then re-machined for an outstanding finish. Up next is the custom airbrushed realistic flame paint work on top of the Hemi engine cover that fits the car perfectly. Paint work and pinstriping was provided by painters Paul and Kyle Comeau.

The car was originally purchased four years ago and Scott immediately had plans for it. Look at it now; what a

transformation. Scott also wanted to share that the awards he wins at car shows are solely in honour of Austin Wolford, his daughter's fiancé who tragically drowned at the lake in the company of Scott and his daughter. So Scott has taken the car to multiple car shows around the North-west to share the special meaning of the build. What an impressive fine tuned machine for the streets or car shows.



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Engine: 5.7L 425hp Hemi
Transmission: factory six-speed with short shifter

Exhaust: Flowmaster

Suspension: Accuair air ride front and rear, manual switches, Viair compressors, polished air tank, installed by The Drop Shop

Body Modifications: 2012 SRT8 chin spoiler, fibreglass cowl induction hood

Paint: Brilliant black, airbrushed real-look flames, red pin striping. Paint by Paul and Kyle Comeau

Interior: Stock leather, CD/DVD flip-down screen

Wheels: American Racing 701 Novas 22x9" front, 22x11" rear

Tyres: Nitto 265/35R22 front, 295/30R22 rear



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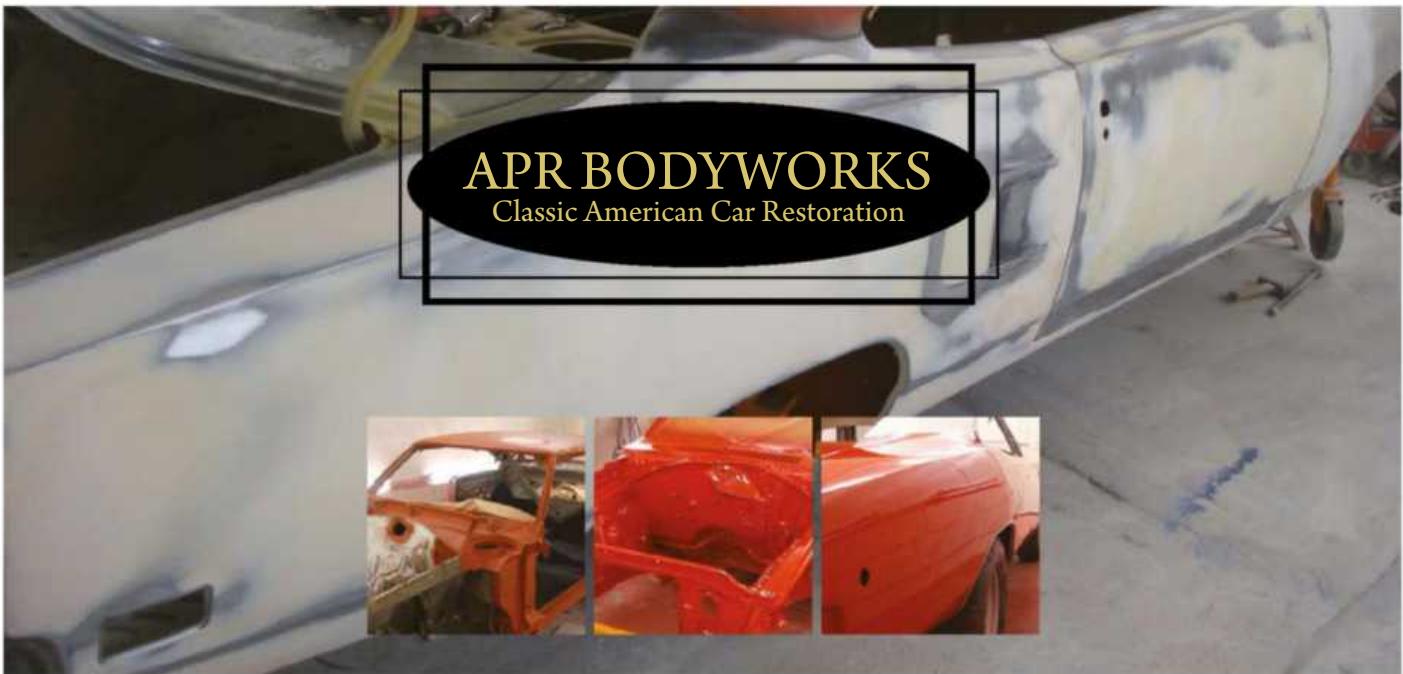
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Words & photography: The Mad Welshman

Life's An Itch

Comical name; serious cruise. The Long Itchington cruise is still going strong.

"I would like to draw your attention to a monthly car meet called The Butty Run that takes place on the first Sunday morning of every month at the Long Itch Diner, in a village called Long Itchington on the A423, within close reach of Southam, Rugby, Coventry, Warwick, Banbury, →





Daventry etc. Every month there is an eclectic mix of vehicles including American muscle, hot rods, classic British, sports cars, bikes, VWs etc, with a few regulars who turn up every month; however, there are newcomers every time. If you add on the fact that the cafe make the best bacon and mushrooms rolls I have ever tasted (the cafe always being rammed full can only be a good sign), this event goes from strength to strength every month!"

For information, photos and dates, see www.butty-run.com. **ACM**



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Words: Dave Smith Photography: Darren Graham

Tri Hard

A beautiful day at Brooklands for the birthday of what could be the world's favourite Fifties car.

The Brooklands Museum Classic American Car day happened back at the beginning of September, and after a distinctly damp August, showgoers were blessed with some gorgeous sunshine. As usual, this Surrey ➔







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event draws a mighty crowd, and this year there was an added theme of the 60th birthday celebration for the ever-popular '55 Chevy. It wasn't all Tri-Chevys of course, with every sort of American and hot rod you can think of packing the gorgeously retro surroundings of Brooklands' grounds, and this well-attended event was a success once again. There are all sorts of classic events happening at Brooklands throughout the year, so check www.brooklandsmuseum.com for details and stay tuned for next year's dates. **ACM**



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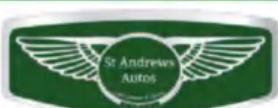
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**next
month**



**IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE OF
AMERICAN CAR MAGAZINE...**

- Long-roof low-life in a '64 Pontiac Safari wagon
- Old-school high-tech for this race-bred '41 Buick

Plus all the events to round off 2015, and plenty more in February's issue

ACM reserve the right to make changes to planned editorial content where necessary.

Muscle Car Corner

Paul Dodd didn't let a little thing like the venue being closed spoil his Sunday cruise!



In October, the local Krispy Kreme shut its doors for a few weeks whilst it was having a refurb, but that didn't stop the monthly onslaught of American cars visiting the place. I got my Sunday morning alarm call at about 9am when fellow club member Alan Wise passed my house and put his foot down, resulting in a wall of sound so loud and distinctive that I knew it must be him. There is a difference between 'exhaust loud' and 'power loud' and whilst the engine in his second-gen Camaro only displaces 383 cubic inches, it

is Pro charged so that when you stand beside it you can literally hear and feel it sucking in huge amounts of air whilst the exhaust pressure bangs around your trouser legs. All this equates to a car that can cruise in traffic all day long, but hit the loud pedal and it runs mid-nines. Soon the rumble of another V8 vibrated the whole house, and that was Jason here to pick me up in the Trans Am as the Olds' is off the road at the moment waiting for a new rear axle bearing that is coming from Mark Williams in the States.

So we arrived at Krispy expecting it to be quieter than normal due to it not actually being open but, as usual, it is rammed, and there is a "Silver Bullet" catering wagon laid on for the doughnuts and coffee, and all is well. There is the usual mix of cars and people there and a new piece of muscle in the shape of a super clean '65 Nova with a hot 383 and low 12-second timeslip just brought in by Big Jason and up for grabs for £20k, and a gorgeous unmolested black '68 Charger that also turned up the month before along with a big red '71 Charger.

If the new Buster Lang meet is anything like as popular as Krispy it will be a hit, but a word of warning, "Big Brother" is watching you; as we left Krispy that day I understand that it wasn't just the regular enthusiasts and photographers such as Darren Graham that were photographing and recording the action, and that images taken could well end up being the evidence that lands you in court. The Police actually shut down the Ace Cafe for the day after some antics there recently as a warning shot so just be careful out there for the sake of your cruise and your licence.

Then at the top end of the car park grouped together is a trio of modern-day muscle in the shape of a black Camaro, a 2013 662hp Mustang Shelby GT 500 and a very special "Voodoo" Dodge Viper. Apparently, only 31 of these road-legal track racers were produced in 2010 and feature a 600hp V10, track-ready suspension, Brembo callipers with StopTech rotors, carbon fibre aerodynamic pieces and a large rear spoiler. This one also had the Nurburgring track logo on the back wing so it looks like it has seen some action. We caught up with the local gossip and heard from Karen Carter that a new Buster Lang breakfast meet is starting up and will be held on the last Sunday of the month from now on, just around the corner in Lyon Road, Merton.

We had more bad news as we headed home - the gearbox in the Trans Am is slipping in second gear, which Jason suspected on the way there but we were hoping it was wheelspin. It shifts up through the gears no problem but pull the shifter back into second and floor it and it flashes up and hits the rev limiter in about a second. So it looks like it will be coming out over winter but Jason is surprisingly philosophical in an, "Oh well, these things happen," sort of way. I guess growing up having an Oldsmobile in the family for 26 of his 29 years and crewing for me since he could hold a spanner, he has seen it all and knows that parts break and performance comes at a price. Just don't tell the missus how much of a price I advise him, but then he knows that, too!



Want to get in touch with Paul? Email editor@americanarmagazine.com or write to the address on page 3

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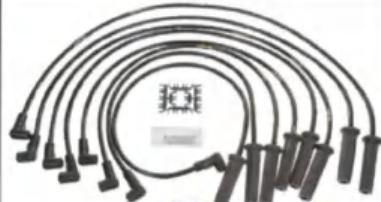
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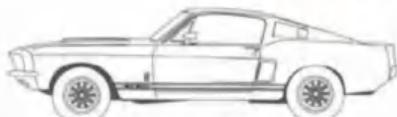
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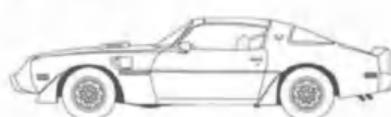
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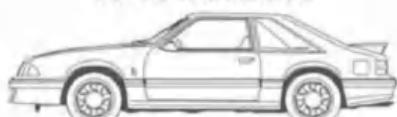
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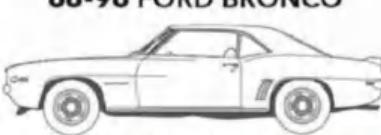
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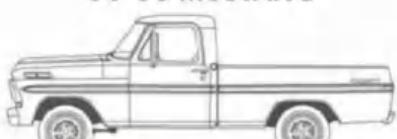
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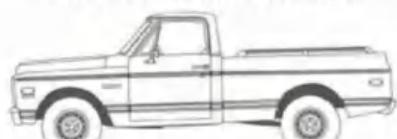
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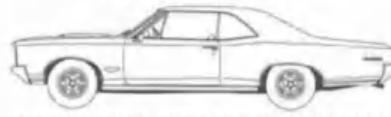
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